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The LADY
of the DYNAMOS
SHAW AND BECKWITH

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**Gift of The People of the United States
Through the Victory Book Campaign
(A. L. A. — A. R. C. — U. S. O.)
To the Armed Forces and Merchant Marine**

THE LADY OF THE DYNAMOS

BY
ADELE MARIE SHAW
AND
CARMELITA BECKWITH



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**THE
LADY OF THE DYNAMOS**

THE LADY OF THE DYNAMOS

CHAPTER I

THE SNARE

“DON’T be a goose, Virginia.” Mrs. Wakeman looked her daughter squarely in the eyes. “I’m telling the truth.”

“I wouldn’t.” Virginia yawned delicately, tapping her soft lips with a nicely tapering forefinger. “It’s so vulgar.”

“I don’t like to see you buy a pig in a poke. Young West may do well, but——”

“The moon may be made of cheese, but——”

“Jared Burroughs has got his half million and it’s growing.”

“Many men have ten half millions.” Virginia glanced suggestively at her novel; Mrs. Wakeman persisted.

“Not many, Virginia. Jared——”

“If you’re recommending a millionaire as a business proposition, why aim for a mere half million——” The daughter paused to yawn again, and again the mother persisted.

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“A million in the hand is worth ten millions where you can’t put a finger on it. How are you to meet multimillionaires?”

“If you would have gone to Little Appleby——” Virginia’s eyes grew reminiscently hard.

“I couldn’t borrow any more last year. It’s been quite difficult enough to get you dressed for this season, and pay Henry his interest. Your father and I always managed to live on what we had. I wish you would tell me what you do mean about these men. You aren’t in love——”

“How do you know?”

“I knew your father.”

“I suppose I am your daughter as well as his.” Virginia resumed her reading.

“I never discovered it.” Mrs. Wakeman spoke with a fretful resentment incongruous with her calm impressiveness of bulk.

“Really, mother, you are childish! One minute you are scared to death for fear I shall marry a poor man, and the next you’re quarreling with me because I don’t want to. I wish you’d grow up!”

“The richest men don’t make the best husbands. Now Mr. Burroughs is rich enough and yet he’d feel the favor was conferred by you.”

“I should hope so!”

“If it’s being a second wife you mind, his first was old and sick and he never cared for her.”

“I don’t want to be any of his wives, one, two,

or three—yet.” Virginia Wakeman put a mark in her novel because she could never tell where she left off if she didn’t, and sat up on the couch where she reposed in the peace of a well-conducted digestion. “I don’t want to be engaged, not now—I prefer two suitors in the bush to one husband in the hand.”

“One suitor won’t stay in the bush. Landon West will want an answer.” Mrs. Wakeman drew the threads of her Hardanger with care, but she also watched Virginia.

“He wants it to-day. I don’t know what to do. If that old man should take a fancy to him——” Virginia spoke thoughtfully. “And do stop talking as if it were all money.”

“It is with a Wakeman. The little I had was enough for your father, and he was perfectly happy. You are your father over again.”

“There’s no sense in that. You were fond of him. I’m not fond of Jared Burroughs.”

“He’s fond of you; it’s the same case exactly. Besides if you send Landon West away now, he may do so well that you can afford to whistle him back.”

“I never knew any young man that made a fortune in Ceylon.”

“You never knew any young man that ever saw Ceylon.”

“Mr. West would be caught on the rebound be-

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fore they got round Gibraltar, or however they go!" Virginia laughed.

" You know no more about Landon West than if you'd met the man yesterday. He won't look at a girl—he wouldn't consider it decent—for months. Then he'll be in the wilderness where there aren't any women and too busy to think of them if they were there. Mr. Burroughs cares enough for you to wait, if you manage him properly. Then if this rich——"

" If this Mr. Riggs takes a fancy to Landon West, he's made. But the Croesus may look on him merely as a hired man; it's too much of a gamble." Virginia frowned peevishly. " I've got to take him or leave him."

" But Mr. Riggs is sure to like him, I should say. Every one likes him. Then you can——"

" Don't say it again." Virginia had been betrayed into plainer speaking than she liked. " I cannot see how a woman with your poise in public can be so coarse in private!"

" I didn't live with your father fifteen years for nothing. You have just his nice ways of doing the vulgar thing, and being shocked if any one gives it a name." Mrs. Wakeman folded her lace with precision; her expression was sourly injured. She had never accepted her lot. The knowledge that she must always resent it made her acid. Yet only Virginia ever saw the ferment under the oil-smooth

manner. "I suppose you will tell Mr. West that you feel you are too young to decide anything so important, and that it's too serious a question and means too much to a girl, for her to be in a hurry, and that since you can't say *yes*, you must say *no*." The mother rose and looked out between the folds of the highly respectable curtains into the emptiness of Forty-sixth Street.

"I suppose so." Virginia thought aloud, her mind on the impending interview. Then she turned sharply. "If you must say such disgusting things, at least don't get me to echoing them to be agreeable," she snapped. "Mr. West has been awfully nice to me and I'm sorry to be obliged——"

"You'd rather marry a man who's young and good-looking, of course. Men are so careless about uniting the graces! If Mr. West had the half million you wouldn't hesitate, would you!" Mrs. Wakeman sneered. She was still angry.

"I believe I shall accept him." Virginia too was angry. "You nauseate me."

"You'll do nothing of the sort." For an instant Mrs. Wakeman feared she had gone too far. Virginia was a bug from whom the stone must not be rolled; exposed to the daylight of recognition she might make some rash scuttle into impulsive action. "Do you want to spend two years in a Ceylon swamp and leave your cousin Marion to be Mrs. Burroughs? Or do you want to stay here as the

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fiancée of an engineer who hasn't anything but his salary, and see yourself used as a near-chaperon!" The mother's voice dropped to placidity; she knew after all that Virginia would go her own secret and selfish way. "Never mind, dear," she said, subsiding into the hypocrisy of their public attitude. "You know two-thirds of what I say is teasing. I never could resist the temptation to stir up a little temper. I bothered your father dreadfully. Of course you won't marry anybody till you're sure of yourself. It's only because I see you are still really a girl——"

"I know, Mummy dear," answered Virginia sweetly. "Of course you must have your little gibe. If I don't care for a man, I can't marry him, that's certain." She took up her novel, and began for the fourth time at the top of the left-hand page. "Will you tell Theresa not to send up any one but Mr. West, and if you happen to be at home, do look in before there's too much talk."

Mrs. Wakeman scrutinized her daughter sharply. Was it so bad as that? Did Virginia fear some weakness in her decision?

"Certainly, if I am in, Virginia; but I promised Mrs. Van I'd be at the Little Sisters' at four. I may be away if he comes early."

"It's on the knees of the gods; I wish something had called me out of town." If there had been an honest word spoken, it was this of Virginia's; it

matched the mother's allusions to her disappointing marriage.

Mrs. Wakeman's face showed a tinge of pity. Then her lips closed in a sudden tightness before she spoke. "I wouldn't worry. You will know exactly what to say." There was the shadow of the sneer remaining in the look she cast at the couch, as she went stately and rustling from the room.

Virginia began again at the top of the left-hand page, reaching for her marrons with her free hand. As she nibbled and read, she dropped deeper in the pillows. Before she had reached the bottom of the right-hand page, she was asleep.

She looked very lovely asleep. There was more than the beauty of youth, there was beauty of line and fineness of molding, there was even of distinction, about Virginia. She looked like women whom artists have been glad to put on canvas. Asleep she was distractingly fair. Her forehead was as smoothly untouched by her quarter of a century as a baby's; her mouth had no drawn lines and no foolishly meditative compression; the lips touched temptingly, the round chin, set well forward, showed firm and clean contours beneath. Her unconscious breathing, regular as an eight-day clock, was uninterrupted for an hour.

Then the maid came in to stir the fire in the grate, and Virginia woke. She picked up the book

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that had slipped to the floor, and carefully put in a mark where she had found it open. It was twenty pages beyond the spot where she had ceased to read.

She dressed early for dinner. West would hardly come before five, and she would invent some excuse for the costume. It was more becoming than other clothes. When she had finished, she stood a long time before the mirror, and tucking the lace on her corsage a half inch lower, viewed the result with a calculating eye.

CHAPTER II

VIRGINIA SAYS NO, BUT SILENTLY TAKES AN OPTION

"You are sure?" West's voice was strained. He was a straight young fellow with a face that could bear daylight.

"Of course I'm sure. I mean I can't be sure, and so I can't go and engage myself to anybody. A girl of twenty-one is too young really to know herself—it's such an important—It means so much—" Virginia's voice broke adorably, and a gentle confusion showed in her grief.

"I'm—sorry. I've only made you feel bad. I suppose I'm a good deal of an ass." West paused. "I thought after this year, after Wednesday—But that was altogether my fault. I cared so much that it was easy, I'm afraid, to make a mere reflection of my own feeling do for another fire."

Virginia drooped penitently; the lace on her breast fluttered with graceful agitation.

"You won't mind—long," she began tentatively. "I shall be off, soon. I shall have work, you

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know. You mustn't let this—Don't let this bother you, Virg—, Miss Wakeman. Work's a great thing."

"It's a great honor, I'm sure, your work. Such a chance of promotion!" Virginia looked up.

"On the contrary. It's rather out of the line of getting on, I suppose. If you had thought you could care—I'm to give Riggs my final answer tomorrow. I ought to go. It's nothing wonderful pottering about a private plant that way, but it's too good an offer to refuse. I wish I knew one thing." West moved nearer and looked down into Virginia's wide eyes. "You'd let me congratulate you before I go? I'm rather an old friend.—Is it another man?"

"No." Virginia was almost explosive. "I don't know any man I like so well as you."

"Yet you're—sure?"

"Yes." Virginia nodded, dropping her lids to touch them with her handkerchief.

"I'm not much of a clairvoyant. If I thought you were going to care, and only didn't know it—But I could never understand men who force themselves on a girl. A beautiful woman can't marry every fellow that wants her. You wouldn't play with me? You're in earnest?" West was nearer still. But he was erect, and the shock and recoil in his face were more visible than any sign of pain.

Virginia removed the handkerchief in a sudden

indignation. As a declared lover West was disappointing. He played no subtle game with words; he refused to give full value to a dramatic situation! Why must he be so literal! "Certainly I'm sure. I'm perfectly sure. I don't see how you could—In a single year you can't have learned to care so—very much." She drooped again in pretty confusion.

"O—Mr. West! I thought it was Cousin Baird! How is the new venture? I suppose we're to congratulate you—" West started. "On all the good things coming your way! Gold and glory and—" Mrs. Wakeman held out her hand. She was quite as handsome as her daughter, and more convincingly sincere; at her mother's age Virginia would seem artificial.

"Thank you, Mrs. Wakeman. They've been stuffing you!" The flush died out of West's face; he had himself in hand. "There's not much gold, and surely no glory, about it, but it's interesting work. I'm going to get all the fun I can out of it."

The look Virginia gave her mother had in it a shrug that only the mother perceived. Now that the girl knew there had been no danger, and she had never been more mistress of herself, she wanted to play a little longer with the fire that had warmed her so pleasantly for a year. But Mrs. Wakeman had blundered because she had never been able to put her mind altogether in the place of Virginia's.

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For her, at Virginia's age there would have been very definite danger in such attractive fire as this young West's devotion. He had a charm teasingly individual as if no one had ever yet known all there was to know of him, as if he himself had yet to discover in his own nature unexplored and alluring territory.

He wasted no time in his going. "This is good-bye," he announced smiling. "I shall be busy till I sail."

"I wouldn't worry about him, Virginia," commented Mrs. Wakeman after the theater. Jared Burroughs had left them, and Virginia looked bored as she pulled off her gloves.

"About whom?"

"Landon West. Haven't you been thinking about him? A man that can talk of fires and reflections when he's being refused, isn't getting a life-blow. When that sort of man really falls in love, there'll be very little rhetoric."

"You were listening! Really, mother!"

"You asked me to, didn't you? You have great histrionic gifts, Virginia, but don't practise on me. I've been theatrical dog for one Wakeman."

The mother's eyes were still on the curtain that had dropped behind West as he had left the room only a few hours before. She did not look at her daughter. "I wonder how I should have advised

you, Virgie, if you hadn't been a Wakeman," she ended in a different tone.

"I decided for myself; and I did exactly right." Virginia walked past the older woman without a good-night. Her determined chin was lifted a little more than usual.

As she mounted the stairs after her daughter, the widow of one Wakeman and the mother of another stopped on the landing to look at herself in the mirror that was a Wakeman heirloom. She touched the initials worked into the gold of the eighteenth century frame.

"Time gave them all the polish," she said half aloud, "and the creatures they married all the pain."

Then she gazed at her own reflection, and what she saw appeared to be antidote for much poison of stagnated affections.

"Jared Burroughs," she confided to the cupids kicking squat and chubby about the Wakeman arms, "will not have to be ashamed of his second mother-in-law."

CHAPTER III

AN ECCENTRIC MILLIONAIRE ORDERS AN ARABIAN NIGHT'S DREAM

WHEN Landon West left the Wakeman house, he turned to the left and walked briskly to Broadway. A little farther south, the home-growing crowd were surging about the Subway station. In his present mood the New York throng looked to him sickly, anaemic, in need of baths. The surface cars were loaded with people packed together in a loathsome contact. As a motorman began to put on the brake, West shook his head and set out northward, walking.

"Is Mr. Burden in his rooms?" He put the question to the ministerial clerk at the office of the Salamis, and the office summoned suite nineteen by telephone.

"His man says he is, but going out directly, sir. Great weather, Mr. West."

"Great," agreed West. He gathered up a couple of newspapers from the stand, glanced at the head-

lines, and entered the elevator. There he dropped the papers on the cushioned seat and left them.

"Nothing in them," he said to the elevator boy.

"Didn't the Brooklyns score on the Giants?" asked the young man eagerly. "That ought to be in by now."

"That's so; it ought." West's mouth showed a little quirk of his usual humor. "I suppose the world's still playing ball."

The elevator boy regarded him speechless. West got out at Burden's floor, and the door of Nineteen opened to him before he could ring.

"Evening, Gaskell.—I'm using your telephone, Jimmy." He called the last through the half-drawn curtain of Burden's dressing-room. Gaskell followed him, turning on more electric bulbs, and pushing the cigars into greater prominence on the desk.

West picked up a cigar from the tray and looked at it, considering, a full minute before he took the receiver off the hook. Then he dropped the cigar and listened, his eyes intent on some object not visible.

"Is this the Standard?" He had got his connection.

"Hello, Gus. Give me Mr. Hammersley."

"Hello! Yes, West. I've decided to go. Want

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a formal resignation, or shall I just shake you people a 'day-day' over the 'phone?"

"The Y. K.? Judkins is ours—at the wholesale rate. Hartwell will tell you to-morrow about that."

"Only mosquitoes, unless Burden goes along. And one assistant."

"I've been thinking of Hinsdale."

"I know, but I think you're mistaken. He gave me my first job."

"Come off the ridgepole, Hammie! You don't like Hinsdale.—And who else is there?"

"Burgess is in Texas irrigating the mule country. I tell you everybody's busy, and I've got to sail this month. Hinsdale's a good engineer. I don't engage him for his social qualities."

"That's good of you. Hope you will. I hate like the devil to get off six thousand miles from your ugly mug."

"They do! Well, I shall be there! Don't let them make speeches and expect me to ans——"

"Call it supper—less agony! Thursday. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, Ham."

West hung up the receiver. His face did not mate well with the boyish slang of his message; it grew more meditative.

He took up the cigar, laid it down, and pulled the receiver again from the hook.

"Mr. Riggs?"

"This is West."

"I'll go."

"I'm glad you're glad!"

"Yes, soon."

"No, not under two weeks, or three. Couldn't get the stuff I want together and ship it in a week."

"Not at all. Wish it were to-morrow, so far's I am concerned. While I sit the weeds will grow. They're said to grow fast out there."

"Any time. Ten?"

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“ I'll be there. Good-bye.”

“ Yes, it's West still.”

“ What?”

“ You can bet on that. Unless you shed a tear or two over my estimates.”

“ Haven't any—living.”

“ No, no 'weeping maid'!”

“ Yes, that's straight. Good-bye.”

“ Settled, is it?” Burden in evening clothes stood in the doorway, and watched West, as the guest lighted the cigar and took his first deliberate whiffs. A bachelor of fifty, long and lean, Burden had the look of a man who had seen the end of happiness and not attained peace, yet he spoke, like a youth, with a zest undulled by disappointment.

“ Mmm,” acknowledged West through closed lips.

“ Going to take me along?”

“ Will you come?”

“ To-night if you like.” Burden poked the fire, pursued a bit of scattered ash with a brass-mounted brush that stood companion to the poker, and

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dusted his hands with his handkerchief. West watched him.

"There'll be some roughing it. You couldn't have Gaskell."

"I shouldn't take Gaskell."

"There'll be flies like a Canadian creek in June, and no tub—without a crocodile!"

"I believe you're trying to get rid of me."

"I'm not. Where is Ceylon on the map? And how do you get there? But they said you were going out?"

"Only to eat. I'll have dinner sent up, and we'll take a few maps between courses." Burden's voice was brisk and filled with delight. The lines of his face, cut too deep for change, were still somber.

"Gaskell!"

"Yes, sir."

"Another handkerchief, and bring the maps of India and the two pale blue books on the chair in my room."

"Yes, sir."

"We'll have a time, my boy." Burden turned to West again. "We'll make the welkin ring and the monkeys dance and the cobra raise his hood! I haven't felt so pleased with the world in months." He sighed, stirred up the fire that was spitting in an unconvinced fashion, and dusted his hands with the fresh handkerchief.

"Gaskell,"

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“Yes, sir.”

“Another handkerchief.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Cheer up, Ravvy; the crocodiles won’t eat you.” Burden pursed his lips, and shook his head at the man behind the cigar. “You’re spoiling your dinner with that.”

“Rot! Wait till I refuse to eat the dinner! What makes you think I’m not cheered up?”

“I miss your foolish effervescence, your prattling gaiety, your——”

“I’m busy. It’s not the crocodile that’s oppressing me. It’s the——” West cast about for some excuse for his lack of animation. “It’s the whole thing. How do I know I’m going to pull it off,—down the hoodoo? It’s new country, new people, new everything to me. I shall be treading on the toes of the black men, and giving them jam for rations, when it’s sacrilege for ‘em to eat it! Riggs has a dream like the Arabian Nights. I couldn’t get that mud hole up to it if I worked a century!”

“That’s all—affectation. You aren’t any more afraid than I am. You’re wishing you could start this minute.”

“That’s true. Bring on your dinner.” West knocked his ashes into the fire.

“What do you want—to celebrate the decision?”

“Make it clear soup and a plain beefsteak.”

West laughed and sent the end of the cigar after its ashes. "It'll be bullock leg where you're going, and fried yams."

It was midnight when West turned the key in the door of his boarding-house, and mounted to his room. The weight that had rested just an inch above his head descended.

Across his own threshold he stopped and regarded his surroundings like a wanderer come home.

"Well, that's over," he said. But he moved slowly to the shelf beside his desk, took down a briarwood, and stood a long time contemplating the empty bowl. As the clock struck, he lifted his eyes, but the moonlight did not reach the invisible time-piece, and he shook his shoulders and pulled out a match. First he lighted the pipe, then the gas. Methodically he put his coat on a hanger, and slid into a nondescript garment that was evidently endeared by use.

"'Umsteigen!'" he said aloud, and heightened the flame of the drop light till the surface of his desk was clear.

Twice as he jerked out papers from the drawers, and tumbled books from the shelves, he paused and looked a long time at nothing. The books and papers filled the flat top of the desk and the chairs, and spilled upon the floor. When the clock struck

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again, West gave his shoulders another shake, impatient, purposeful; and puffing stormily at the briar, set to work. Daylight was making a sickly effort to discredit the gas, before he stopped. A neat sheaf of note slips covered with figures and condensed writing lay clamped by a letter clip upon the map of Ceylon.

Then West turned out the light, plunged his head into the basin in a door-guarded recess that balanced his closet on the other side of the chimney, rubbed his hair with a towel to whose texture the bark fiber of his Ceylon jungle would have been soft, threw himself on the leather couch by the window, and fell instantly and soundly asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

STARLIGHT AND A SOUND CONCLUSION

THE jungle ached with the heat. From the glowing deeps of the forest, hot sighs breathed across the camp, scorching the flesh, sickening the nostrils with sweetness. Even the brown men stretched in the circle of the firelight, stirred in their slumbers, tormented by the stings of midges and the bites of marauding ants.

"Poor devils! is it the oil I wonder that keeps their skins from cracking?" Burden had waited for no answer, but, smeared with citronella, whose smell, though grievous, was less rancid than the cocoanut oil of the brown men, had barricaded himself into his leaf and bamboo hut, and, calm in discomfort, slumbered like a lamb.

Only West was awake. And West was barely conscious of discomfort. Other things absorbed him, the enterprise on which he was bent, the curious behavior of his assistant, John Hinsdale, most of all the scene of which he was at the present moment the sole animate center.

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The heart of the Ceylon jungle demanded absorption. It was not altogether friendly. Even the lake, rain-made from a swamp that exhaled unseen its mildewed odors, threatened through the intervening thicket. The dark had its own menace; the little camp knifed out of the surrounding blackness by the light, seemed a mere spot in a savage immensity. Within the outer edge of the brightness, picketed to leeward of the hastily reared huts, a herd of small humpy bullocks huddled and slept uneasily.

Into the well of the clearing—walled with strange growths huge-leaved, grotesque, and massive,—the stars shone in a naked splendor. On the other side of the world the stars shone modestly, glimmering in familiar confusion, demanding nothing: here every sun and planet of them all sent its rays piercingly insistent, exacting tribute of attention. West looked up at them, the strain of a hard day's work giving way to a thrill of mystery, a lust of discovery and conquest.

“‘ Stars of the summer night,’ ” he hummed,
“‘ far in yon ’”—

“Cut it out.”

“‘ Veil, veil, your golden light. She sleeps, my lady sl—’ ”

“Here! Here! Enrico! Let her sleep!” Burden had waked. Loud slappings and quaint blasphemies interrupted his monotonous snore.

"What with Burden's snoring and your singing, West, I shall be utterly unfit for to-morrow. When will this camp settle down!" Hinsdale had also waked. His voice issued from the second hut. The milk of human kindness was not in it.

"You haven't a soul between you! Under the light of the tropic star, Tinkle, O tinkle the gay guitar,—Come out of there. It's too good to lose."

"Damn the tropic star and the tropic skeeter." Burden was moving about. "O I'll sing to you, man. Starlight in the jungle—I don't think! Centipedes and serpents, and a stink! That's my idea of the jungle done in rhyme, though prose, plain prose in paragraphs——"

"Come out, you rotter." West chuckled. The twig of dead satinwood he flung upon the fire flared into a column that showed him laughing.

Hinsdale was still grumbling. Burden had wormed himself out of the insect-proof screen, and was carefully battening his defenses behind him.

"Aren't you fellows going to bed?" Hinsdale's voice again, with the intoned reproach of the needlessly martyred.

"'Tis a cat and a coon and a chimpanzee,
Jes' wait dar, honey, an' we'll come to tea.'

—No, you don't, Bill."

"Who in hell is Bill?" Burden picked up the waterproof bag and the blanket that he had dragged

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out, and shook them. "I suppose you're going crazy and I shall have to shoot you!" he added mournfully.

"Bill is the 'Le-o-pard.'

"This is the Le-o-pard, my child,
His temper's anything but mild."

Goddewana says he's out there considering us."

Burden stood waiting in his pajamas, pajamas with trouser bottoms neatly turned up. His gray mustache looked white against his burned skin. His words seemed the sign of a natural exuberance, contradicting the tragic meaning of his face.

Hinsdale sighed gustily under his palm thatch.

"Going to sit down?" Burden subdued his voice.

"'Sure, Mike.' Lie down if you like. Come over here where we can see the lake." West's tone had also dropped. He woke Goddewana and led the way. Burden followed, his bag and blanket gathered carefully from contact with the fecund earth.

On the side of the hillock farthest from huts and men and sleeping beasts the log of a newly felled tree lay clear of the overhanging shrubs. Burden inspected it briskly, with lighted matches, before they sat down. Then he thrust his feet into the bag, tied the strings under his arms and wound the blanket about his head. He reeked of citronella.

West watched the making of the human cocoon and took his pipe from between his teeth to laugh again. Burden pulled a briar from his pajama pocket and filled it from a birdskin pouch, pressing down the tobacco with a fastidious thumb.

"Why the mirth?" he inquired briefly between the first two puffs. The smoke curled around him and a wave of mosquitoes retreated.

"You're a fake, Jim, a low-down, deceivin' fake." West blew billows of smoke at the hovering insects.

"As how?"

"You're a good deal of what your Gaskell calls a 'owlin' swell'; you're quite the lady about your clo' and Lord, man, you'd rather swelter in that blanket with the thermometer in Hades than disfigure your lily neck with bites, but—"

"Idiot, I don't want a fever."

"When you first suggested coming out here globe-trotting with a business expedition I thought we'd see the last of you when the

"way got rough and hard, Mama,"

but 'twas old Hins— "Twasn't you that fumed! You love it, you old rotter."

"Why not?"

"You've never uttered a syllable of complaint that wasn't joshing. I'd just like to mention,—this in staccato between whiffs—"that you're the

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best thing they ever turned out in the line of a traveling pal."

"Is this an ant hill?" Burden, pleased and embarrassed, writhed in his bag, worming his way from the vicinity of a suspicious mound. "I wouldn't spoil your panegyric, but if we're beside an ant hill you'll see me fretty, distinctly fretty."

"No. It's not an ant hill. This log may be a trifle infested. Fret on. It's good to hear your kind of fret.—Do you think Hinsdale's sick?"

"I do not. I think he's got the ingrowing egotism."

"You think it's just grouch, but that's all tommy—"

"Because you're the boss and he's the helper. If you want to know, Ravvy, that's it in a nutshell."

"I've tried not to emphasize that—"

"You're too careful. You pamper him. It sticks in his crop. I can see the crop bulging. If you don't look out you'll come a cropper over that man."

"No doubt it's the climate," interrupted West lazily. "Affects the brain, produces—"

"A sour-dough temper? Not at all. Native piggishness acted on by circumstances."

"I meant produces puns."

"Who made any puns?"

"You did. *Crop, cropper.* Here, man, look

out; you'll set me afire. Honestly, Jim, you're not fair to Hinsdale; I like him."

"Of course you like him. You think he's a great soul behind a grumpy mug."

"Stuff! I think the fellow's sick. He's always played in pretty hard luck. No friends."

"Exactly. No one could stand him but you. He's never seen over his own collar yet. Just sits in behind it and feels himself."

"Don't be a goop, Jimmy. He's reserved, I know."

Burden snorted. "He's got a hide like a hippopotamus. He'll talk all day about himself! 'Reserved'! A draught of praise for another man gives him the shivers just as a breeze gives the hippos in the zoo the pneumonia. Hurrrgh!"

"Getting a good many bites, Jimmy?" West grinned at the stars.

"I am not. I have sense enough to protect myself against bites. I am trying to warn you. Lord, Boy, I'm afraid it's your way to lend a hand like those 'Look-out-but-not-up' people that picnic all over the United States and boost the summer theaters."

"Give me a match."

"Such men as John Hinsdale"—Burden further lowered his voice—"do very well in civilization, but get 'em off near to nature's heart and the stingers they've been hatching swarm."

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"Stow it, Jimmy. You're sore because he threw me down to-day before the men. I'd hurt his feelings some way."

"Feelings'! What's feelings got to do with a man's work! He acts like a blatting billygoat at the breast."

"I like your figures. Graceful—" West broke his lips apart with a little puff of smoke and slid down rashly, till his back was propped against the log. "What a night for making love," he went on. "Who says that every scene cries aloud for appropriate action, the dank garden for the murder, the—"

"Stevenson, of course. 'It was a wonderful clear night of stars.' He said that too. Must have seen these Southern beggars often."

West clasped his hands behind his head, his pipe gripped in his teeth. Both men looked up to the Southern Cross, silent. A soft wonder of unfolding night flowers touched the thicket.

"Time for the moon," said Burden at last. "And there she blows." He settled a stout safety pin so its spring should take a tighter grasp of his improvised hood, and leaned forward, knees wide spread, a hand on each. "Wish I could paint it," he said solemnly.

West's eyes twinkled in the firelighted shadow. It was Burden's dear belief that he could paint.

The lake, glinting in faint sparkles under the

stars, woke under the moon to a pale glory. The land breeze, languid with heavy odors of the lush-grown earth, played across the surface of the water that moved to its touch as love wakes to a caress. The trampled lane where the bullocks had gone down to drink showed transformed and wonderful in the moon-enchanted night.

"The golden pathway of the heart's desire." Somewhere in an old magazine—a dentist's office in a prairie village had yielded it to solace an hour of waiting—West had seen the words. They had been lost in a jungle of rhetoric as unpruned as the vegetation of this Eastern island, but they had picked themselves out of the tangle and stayed with him.

They said themselves over to him now as he lounged against the prostrate trunk, the smoke half veiling the splendor of the light. On either side the opening a cinnamon laurel sentinelled the way, its blossoms, that had been dull by day, white as ghost flowers under the redeeming moon. From a mighty ironwood a spray of trailing vine swung steeple high and trembled to the wind. Bamboos feathered like giant plumes of dancing naiads, festoons of flowering creepers flung out from tree and mammoth shrub, great glossy leaves, polished as green mirrors, each the glinting roof to fathomless mystery of shade beneath, all the shameless

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wildness of the untamed soil, moved him with strange delight.

Close at hand some riot of tropical bloom sent out a fragrance sweeter than the breath of the wind. To West the very heat seemed penetrated with something poignant, a sharpness of full-grown desire, a sort of ecstasy of existence.

Yet he had no premonition of the coming day.

"Smells like a hothouse," he said, hiding his mood under the crudeness of the phrase, and let his head lie thoughtlessly upon the log whence some creature dislodged slid in soft haste.

Burden lighted investigatory matches, and found nothing. "Never knew before that tropical flowers were good to smell," he answered. His eyes were on his companion. Something in the hour and the sensuous charm of the quick-growing, quick-breathing earth pricked him with a sudden consciousness of the vigorous grace of the figure stretched beside him.

"What a night for making love!" had been West's words. "I hope she'll be the right girl," Burden muttered through his teeth, climaxing an unspoken sequence of ideas.

"What?" West looked up, and the moon shone straight into his smiling eyes. Burden lighted another match, and appeared to hunt again for his centipedes and serpents. Then he stamped out the spark and shook his head.

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"I'd like to get this in oils now," he sighed, "the huts and the men and the bullocks."

"And you in your pajamas."

"Goddewana there—Look, Ravvy, hot enough to bake a lizard, and he's putting more wood on that fire! What's the matter with the bullocks?"

"Smell the le-o-pard most likely!" West's tone was hazy.

"Those brown men sleep like babies."

"Babies don't sleep, Jimmy. They cry."

"Give me the Singhalese. All smooth lines and curves—no slab effect. Round but slim. The Tamils are too stocky."

"They'd make more miles under a load of cement I'm thinking." West sat up. "But the Singhalese are all right. I like them. What's that ribbony thing below there stringing all over the shop?"

"I don't know, Lan." Burden shook out his ashes, whacked the pipe tenderly on the log, and rubbed the hot bowl pensively against his nose. "I don't know much about this part of the world. That was why I wanted to come, though I had another reason."

"Connected with your creditors?"

"Not in the least. I wanted to give you the benefit of my walk and conversation, improve your manners, inform your youthful mind, refine, en-noble——"

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"O you did!" Landon West's voice was still more dreamy. The night possessed him. "Do you know why I came?"

"For gold, and *kudos*, and the fun of setting up a lot of Philistine machines where the very name of 'em is improper. By Jove—" Burden held his refilled pipe in his hand, forgetting to light it—"this is the biggest thing I ever saw. Look!" he whispered.

An immense trampling from far off crashed on their ears and a great body heaved itself out of the burnished tangle on the other side of the lake and a smaller great body followed.

"An elephant and her cub come down to drink."

"*Calf*, isn't it—or isn't it!" The two men watched while the huge creatures sluiced water over their scorched backs. "You can almost see the steam rise," murmured Burden. "The little one's got mired.—Good, young one, good for you! He's taken a clove hitch on Mama's tail, and the old one's pullin' him out. I call that neat! Did you see that, man?"

The apparitions had crashed back into the darkness from which they had emerged.

"I suppose if you were to spin that dinky little yarn for your Boojums at the club they'd have suspicions!" West's voice had a tinge of the excitement in Burden's.

"Why *did* you come?" Burden harked back to

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the question as if he were asking, "Do you like grilled sweets?"

For a moment West made no answer. The sudden sight of elephants at large had struck home the strangeness of the scene. Often afterward the night came back to him as the dormant hour of ease before the pangs of a new birth.

"I came," he said at length, "because a girl jilted me. Though that's not fair to the girl. Because she wouldn't accept me."

"Did you love her?" Again Burden spoke as one who mentions potatoes or turnips.

"I saw her pretty often this last year. So did another man."

"Has she taken the other man?"

"No."

"Has he money?"

"Some. But that has nothing to do with it."

"Is he old?"

"Oldish."

"About my age. That is, twenty years older than you are. And you had been with her a good deal for a year? Are you pledged to this girl, Lan?"

"No. It's all off. She—That was why I jumped at this offer. Though of course other things counted."

"You'd have taken it anyway."

"I suppose so. But I should have been sorry to

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go. As it was I was glad to get away. But nights like this, a man, even if he isn't a conceited ass, sometimes wonders. Once I thought——”

“Out with it. Ever drop anything down a dis-creeter well than J. B.?”

“O, once, off and on, you know——”

“Pretty steadily all the time in fact——”

“I thought she seemed to like me.”

“Tell me the truth. If you could have that girl here this minute, would you? Can you imagine her not minding mosquitoes and thirst and sun-burn and slugbugs and all the rest of it in order to be with— She'd have snapped you up like one o'clock if you'd been rich as the old one. She's waiting to see—Hm! I wasn't going to be offen-sive. Don't get huffy. Must have my croak, Boy. Tell me—do you honestly wish she were here?”

“Are you two going to buzz and brum-brum all night?” Hinsdale, massive against the firelight, stood over them accusing. “You're worse than mosquitoes. This is a sweet climate. Even my looking-glass is all mould inside.”

“Forget the mould, son. What's a little thing like mould when we can still eat!” West rose, and Burden lighted another pipeful.

“It's of no use for me to try to sleep till the whole camp is quiet.” Hinsdale addressed him-self to Burden.

“I don't expect to be noisy,” Burden answered

gently, and settled himself on the log. "I may stay here all night."

"Guess I'll turn in. Night, Jimmy. Night, John." And West first inspected his precious packs, then crawled under the cheesecloth of Burden's screen. Hinsdale and he were to have shared a shelter, but Hinsdale had suggested the change in the interest of his own slumbers, and the other two had acquiesced, upon which Hinsdale had shown himself aggrieved.

"*Ayúbowán, Goddewana Joseph,*" called West through the mosquito defenses. The guide tending the fire turned a pleased face to the blank curtain rippling in the wind.

"*Ayúbowán, Mahatmayá,*" answered Goddewana in the speech that was old before English was born.

The steel-strapped packs lifted on a log platform bulked formidable to the sight.

"Guess *they* aren't moulding," West murmured to himself as he gave them a final glance. He had said good-night abruptly because he wanted to be alone. He wanted to escape Burden's last question.

Surely he wasn't fickle enough to love to-day and forget to-morrow! But even if Virginia Wake-man had loved him, should he want her on this expedition? Of course not. It was no place for a woman. Business would bore her; discomfort would kill her. He couldn't imagine any circum-

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stances when Virginia would be pleased with a wilderness. But she was a beautiful, witty part of civilization. West stretched drowsily on his blanket.

Where, he wondered, was Virginia now? Just coming out of the theater; and Burroughs, rich and a bit too fat, and much too old, was handing her to the carriage, and Virginia's mother was saying playful things to him over Virginia's shoulder. No, time was different on the other side of the world! They might be out in Burrough's car — The thought should have given him a pang of jealous misery! It had, often enough, before. Why didn't it now? He must be too sleepy for pangs! A good wholesome tire the wilderness gave a man!

Poor old Hinsdale with his mouldy glass! "Why does he care?" wandered on the current of the dream-bordering thoughts. And Jimmy Burden—Good old Jimmy! What a night for lovers, with the moon and that lake! What had Jim said? "The right girl?" Was there always a right girl? Extraordinary country—so many lilies! Lilies and lilies and lilies—He floated out among them and some one was singing a lullaby. It must have been in the dreams, for Burden, sitting like a bump on his log, did not sing. Once he uttered himself aloud.

"If he'd loved that girl he'd never have spoken

about her to me. I know him," he muttered; and knocked out the ashes for the final time to crawl inside his cheesecloth and make the jungle resound with his sleeping.

The fire broke in scattering embers, the bullocks woke to slap exasperated noses against their bitten flanks and snuff anxiously at the wind; stealthy creatures looked hungrily from the close-crowding forest upon the paling circle of the flame. Great night moths swung and hung like drifting flowers swirling in increasing numbers above the fire glow, till faithful Goddewana again on his feet restored the flame and sent new waves of heat into the furnace breath of the creeping monsoon.

Below, unseen, the shining lake rippled and sighed along its sloughing banks. And far beyond lake and camp, deep in the climbing tangle of the wood where thorn thickets were taking savage possession of an abandoned plantation, the wild pigs rooted among neglected palms.

There, in the thicket, on the veranda of a rotting bungalow, a girl looked out into the wilderness and the night. Absorbed in a misery silent as the stars, she, like West, had no premonition.

CHAPTER V

AN UNKNOWN SINGER IN THE WILDERNESS

THERE was excitement, triumph, jollification, in the air. They had arrived.

Camp was made. The natives, carefully withdrawn, prepared their meal uncontaminated by shadows of the unclean European. Each group, marked off by caste from every other, chattered and laughed over the food, washing it down with cocoanut milk.

Goddewana Joseph, joint product of the Orient and of missionary training, came up across the landscape, his arms full of green nuts.

"Siwwá finding these. Largest number other side clearing." He addressed the words to West who stood over his packs verifying the count. Behind Goddewana the low-caste toddy drawer, who had mounted for the nuts, beamed respectfully.

Burden and Hinsdale were near, each in his way appraising the spot where they had come to a halt.

West caught the nut Burden tossed him. "You think it's all right for us to get outside this cocoa-

nut juice? Apt to give strangers the collywobbles, eh, Goddewana?"

"I not understanding manner of colleewobbels!" Goddewana regarded West with a heartening smile. "Cocoanut milk green like this giving greatest complainings masters not living in Island." He imitated in a sufficiently energetic pantomime the anguish of a severe colic, and folded his arms to bow.

Hinsdale had pounced on the green armful, and had one of the nuts opened.

"Fudge!" he said. "These black fellows want the whole pile for themselves."

"I wish you'd let the stuff alone for a day or two. What shall we do if you get sick, Johnnie?" West spoke quickly.

"Fudge!" Hinsdale drank and ostentatiously opened another nut. "Cool as if it came off the ice. Better try it."

"Don't be a kid, John Hinsdale!" West dropped his hand with a friendly thump on his assistant's shoulder.

"I don't know that the assistant in an engineering expedition is obliged to submit his digestion to the direction of his superior." Hinsdale went on pompously with his feast. The other two laughed promptly at what they chose to consider a pleasantry. Hinsdale expanded.

"You'd hardly think, to see it now, that this

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God-forsaken hole had ever been under cultivation, would you." He was ready to split the shell of another cocoanut.

"Well it's certainly let its beard grow." Burden was unslashing a note-book strapped into a mould-proof cover. He looked over it at the scene.

It was a depressing little that was visible. An earth platform, scraped hurriedly clear of vines and lopping weeds, was the only plain evidence of former habitation.

"It's Talla Goya.. There's a row of areca palms below there that might have been started to mark a boundary. The platform settles it."

"Bum place for raising anything! What was the matter with your friend? A little dippy?" Hinsdale was still drinking.

"Cut it, you tank. You'll have the infantum." West scrutinized the thicket with an interested eye. "Suffering smoke! It's dark before it's twilight, and I meant to explore that relic of a road before the light was gone."

"Come on; try it now. If it gets dangerous we can come back." Hinsdale, refreshed by his orgy, spoke with uncommon enthusiasm.

Burden squinted doubtfully at the break in the thorn-tree web that must once have been an avenue. "I shall stay here and write up my diary. This will be a book. If you want to show up as heroes—"

"No question about your hero! The rest of us will be mere foils for the great engineer, Landon West." Hinsdale's disgruntled mood of the journey was returning. There was the same dry rot in his utterance. "What you going to call your book?" he asked, covering the sneer.

"Willie on the Pickle Boat, or Why Smith Left Home," put in West. "Come on."

To prowl at night in the jungle is not a pastime chosen of the wise, but it might prevent Hinsdale's lapse into his unfriendly humor.

The two men dug out of their duffel bags pocket lamps that were to give the inhospitable polonga time to make his retreat. For some minutes of their cautious advance, the way seemed full of rustling creatures that slithered to shelter from the sharp discovery of the light. Above them were even wilder scurryings than below. Twice they were pelted by wakeful monkeys who gibbered at them in a startled rage. Scolding cries multiplied in the forest, and wailed into the distance.

"Ghosts of Adam and Eve in the garden!" exclaimed West and came to a halt. "What's that?"

The other man paused, "Nerves?" he jeered.

"It's singing. Listen. It can't come from camp. It's a woman!"

"*'Weib und gesang'*!—So it is. I'll bet she's black as my hat. Come along!" John Hinsdale took up the march excitedly.

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The road led them nearer the sound; it came suddenly into the open and stopped.

In the noises of the night their steps were only part of the rattle and rustle of the moving world. They had ceased to speak. Their lamps lay unused in their hands. Beside them a tall clump of bamboos clicked dry stems together, as the wind swayed the heavy tops high above their heads. Before them a lighted picture framed itself in the blue dark. They were confronting a bungalow, a European bungalow. On its tottering veranda was a girl whose face was turned toward them.

For an instant the night seemed to West to be still. The tree-roofed dusk where they stood cloaked them in massive shadow, but on the veranda the smoky glow of native lamps made a mysterious brightness. The girl was singing, accompanying herself with an occasional touch on some mandolin-like instrument. The monotonous swing of the half melancholy air had an Oriental sound, but finally words detached themselves, English words. They penetrated the sense with a curious appeal.

“Dream, dream, little babee;
Night in the forest, night on the sea!
The jungle folk sleeping
With one eye are peeping,
But Mummy’ll watch little babee.
Sleep; sleep;
Sleep, my little babee.”

The singer's voice, lovely in its warmer depths, half plaintive in its undertone, dwelt with a little foreign accent on the last word. A beautiful voice anywhere, a voice, haunting, entralling. Coming upon them out of the hitherto untenanted jungle, with the singer bowered in the opening moonflowers that climbed the veranda pillars, it took the breath. Yet it was not the voice that most startled and overwhelmed one of the prowlers from the camp. It was the girl's face, lifted now and then to the dark outside the veranda shelter, with a question that made its beauty first of all a revelation of the spirit.

“The monsoon is blowing—
Ah, who can be knowing
What dreams it is bringing to thee!
Sleep, sleep ; sleep, sleep ;
Sleep, my —”

The song had dropped to a mere rill of melody. A figure shuffled across the lighted room behind the veranda, and a man from somewhere in the house mumbled impatiently. The girl answered.

“All right, Dad.” West was conscious of relief at the answer, although it was not till long afterward that he knew why.

“Is this it?” The girl changed from the humming undertone, and gave her voice to the stars. This time the song was not in English, but it was again a lullaby.

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Querulous protest came from the lighted room.

"O I know," the girl answered again. "But she never sang that one twice alike. She made it up as she went along."

The tone from beyond the window had been thick, muffled. West heard it with a quick sense of hidden tragedy.

The girl was singing once more, fitting the tune with the wandering word pictures that mothers croon to children cradled in their arms. The sweetness of the singing hurt, as if the heartbreak behind it gave it power to cleave straight in through the surface thought of the shrinking listener to the protected core of his emotions. West turned, shamed in his involuntary eavesdropping, and Hinsdale followed in silence.

But before West had moved, the girl had risen, and the light of the cocoanut lamps had struck full upon a face beautiful as that which set the old men into a passion of despair before the walls of Troy.

"If there's goin' to be any pretty girl in this, I'm glad you're out of the runnin'," Hinsdale chuckled, still excitedly.

West did not stop to wonder where Hinsdale had heard of Virginia Wakeman. He was distinctly aware of irritation, strong as his distaste for the coarseness of the words.

"There's nothing but work to keep me in order,"

he said after a pause. "I guess there's enough of that."

They found Burden with his legs in his bag, his head again blanketed against the hordes of jungle pests, bent absorbed over his notes. Perspiration and citronella dripped upon the pages. Siwwá, cheerfully interested, stood holding a plaited palm-leaf torch whose smoke reinforced the writer's precautions. Behind the group was the hacked-out clearing, black and yellow in the shifting glare; against it, Siwwá's body, shining with oil, showed a statue-like rigidity.

The rigidity yielded, and Burden dismissed the torch, and closed the "dope"-smeared book. While Hinsdale enlarged with garrulous animation upon the discovery of the girl, the diary was thrust into its cover and carefully strapped. Then Burden flipped the native *fauna* from his bag and stood up.

"You look like the fag end of a potato race," commented West. He had added nothing to Hinsdale's narrative, though more than once it had made him wince.

Burden looked with wide-awake interest at Hinsdale, bubbling with questions, but upon West he cast only a concentrated glance that he tried to make casual.

"Potato races are at least respectable," he said. "I don't wander into well-conducted camps at night talking of singing nymphs, and wearing my hair

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done in vines and leaves.—Why did you sneak away? Why didn't you speak to the lady?"

"Who can she be? I'm betting West knew all about her before we came!". Hinsdale was still voluble.

"I was distinctly told no one was left on the place when Deering abandoned it two years ago. Riggs said that whatever buildings had been put up would have been eaten by ants long ago."

Burden asked no further questions but more than once in the night he woke to make half audible remarks to himself.

"Suppose she's a half-breed siren! O Lord!" he groaned at last quite aloud, and West, disturbed in his dreaming, demanded the reason for speech.

"These thrice-dammed, triply accursed devils! They're biting the hide off the author of 'Ten Weeks in the Jungle illustrated-by-himself.' Jumping Jehosaphat, I wish——"

"You're woozy in the head. There's not a mosquito inside your screen—nor any air. Go to sleep."

"I will," replied Burden with meekness. "But —hist—let me tell you gently, Hinsdale tried some more cocoa milk before he turned in. It was warm as a puddle of course, but he guzzled it because I begged him not to."

West made a wordless sound of wrath. "Go to sleep," he commanded.

"Certainly, just as you say!" Burden was still meek. "Who do you suppose that girl is, Lan?"

"Your long-lost grandmother once removed. Shut up, Jimmy; I want to sleep!" Yet it was not sleep West wanted, but the sound of the lullaby in his dreams.

CHAPTER VI

THE LADY OF THE DYNAMOS: A TABLECLOTH DRESS AND A LESSON IN LIGHT

WEST climbed quickly along the river bank when he should have crept. The sun of Ceylon is not the sun of the Sahara, but it is a tropical sun. In the gorge below him, the Talipal shredded its current in rapids, and drenched with spray the shower of vines along its matted walls.

To the electrical engineer, the shout of the water cried *power*; at the cool flick of its spume thrown into his face as he dropped nearer the stream, he thrilled lustily.

A plover far up over his head among the tree tops was repeating "Did he do it? Did he do it?" and "You bet he did," West answered as the roar mounted louder in his ears. Somewhere above were falls!

The fascination of "doing it," doing the thing he had come out to do, grappled him; it sent a stinging joy of action all over his clean-built body.

Even the burden of Hinsdale's childishness that had made the morning a thankless task of nursing, fell from him and rolled into the stream.

"Put the power-house a mile below, and there should be head enough for ten thousand horse power," he was saying to himself when he mounted to the top of the bank, drawing himself up by the giant basket-work of roots, and came straight upon the girl.

Where he hung, the shore jutted well out over a deep rock basin that took the noisy river and hushed it, as a shouting child is hushed in its mother's arms. But even there the sound of the stream was loud, and the girl lay, unaware of his presence, her cheek propped on her left hand, her eyes studying the battered book beneath them with greedy intensity.

Beside her a little bed of red earth was covered with diagrams. Parallel lines long and short, with corkscrew curls of lines connecting them, made a hieroglyphic across which a queer animal pottered about, nosing the ground with a prehensile snout.

The girl's right hand was closed on the stick she used as a stylus. A young banana leaf, big enough to serve as an awning, was spiked by thorns to the tufted tree above her head. The shadow of the leaf fell on her hand and the smooth curve of her cheek and on the slim length of her lightly clad body.

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In a single second West had seen three things, that the unknown girl of the bungalow was there at his feet, that she had drawn on the sand diagrams for the charging of storage battery cells, that the book was illustrated by the picture of a dynamo.

The shock, linking the singer of the moonflowers with the thought uppermost in his own mind, left West speechless.

“‘The external wires of the ring-wound armatures’ are used for commutator bars! I don’t understand, Penny. I don’t—understand.” She spoke the words through her shut teeth, her dropped gaze alternately on the picture and on the sniffing little beast. “And I must, I must.” There was fear, an unquenchable resolve that fought the fear, in the passion of the half-articulated words.

West drew himself higher, sure that the rustle of the vines would betray his nearness. Penny, if that was the name of the small beast of the sniffing habit, had coiled himself into a ball. No reply to the girl’s question could proceed from a seclusion so complete!

“‘The dynamo is intended,’” read the girl in a swift mutter, still oblivious, “‘at a speed of 75 R. P. M. to develop ____”

“We’ve got that beaten to a standstill.” West was on the ledge. He bent over the book examining the picture. “We run ‘em up now to fifteen hundred a minute.”

"How much electricity will that make?"

Never since Eve wandered in her paradise, had a woman been more assured of her solitude, but the girl was game. She had grown for an instant pale with the wan surprise of startled flesh at blood suddenly withdrawn; now her cheek burned scarlet like the shore blossoms in the sun. Yet her question followed his interruption steadily, as if it fell into the midst of a long conversation.

"All the way up to a hundred and fifty thousand horse-power."

In spite of the shock, the girl was intent on his answer. Before he could fully appreciate the amazing quality of her interest, West was sliding from the ways; his native element bore him buoyantly out in a full flood of discourse on the theme dearest to him. In two minutes he was teaching this unknown girl, testing her elementary knowledge, supplementing, explaining, with genial enthusiasm.

"May I take your stick?" West swept her antiquated storage cells into limbo and patted the earth smooth. "You see—" In his talk, clear, swift, natural, he was conscious of a tremendous longing to satisfy her eagerness, make plain to her what she wanted to know. To please her seemed all at once an ambition worth any man's while.

She had gathered herself up, not suddenly like an embarrassed dairymaid, but unobtrusively regaining a sitting posture. Her feet were hidden

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under the folds of some queer Oriental fabric, stiffened with threads that gleamed like gold.

" You scattered the sand; better put it back!" she glanced at the land side of the rock shelf and a little bar of glittering earth. Snakes won't cross it. No. On the other side of the tree." Then she raised her eyes from the ground and looked full into West's face. In the look was all the mystery and the fire of this strange island of far seas. Her voice, even in talk, was richer, lower, than the voices he knew best, but its tones were clear and straight, and the gaze lifted to his was also straight, and clear.

As West fell to again with stick and speech, setting forth the wonders of the past decade, curiosity fastened on him. The consciousness of the situation thrust itself between her questions and the interest of her replies. Who was she? What was an educated English girl doing in this jungle? What strange need behind her listening drove her to this forgetful energy of learning?

Her eyes were following every motion of his stick with an intentness quite apart from any desire to flatter the draughtsman. Nothing unfamiliar passed unchallenged. When a link escaped her, slipping out of reach of her ignorance, something queerly desperate and pinched troubled her expression.

So that more and more West forgot her, drawn

out and away by the demand of her close attention. Surprised by her knowledge, he grew more and more technical. Gradually they were both sucked into the undertow of his own thought, the *river*.

"There's a fall above here. The natives call it the Hammer of the Gods." She lifted an arm, pointing up the mountain where the unbroken forest closed on the stream. Her loose sleeve was made of something soft and pinkish; the sun struck the tint through it in a rose shadow on the inside of her bare arm. Virginia Wakeman's most pointed loveliness had never sent home so swift a barb. What tragic need had urged the questions incongruous with the wilderness? What heavy care, unnatural in her youth, lay behind the grave intentness of her look?

"Why are you here?" The girl stood up and questioned the man.

"I've come to set your river to work." West was on his feet, his eyes turned back to the heights from which the stream emerged. As his look fell to the ledge, some shade in her face shocked him into a sense of incomparable rudeness. She was waiting for what? To know who he was, what was his right to be at Talla Goya? Of course. But that did not altogether account for what startled him. He could not make haste enough to answer it, to reassure the fear that seemed to lurk in her glance. Behind her eyes and lips, he felt the vibra-

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tion of a wonderful energy throbbing out of sight.
Its beat was hurried by some unhappiness.

“Did you ever hear of Zenas Riggs?” he asked.
“No.”

“He’s an American millionaire, an eccentric millionaire some call him, because he is just a trifle off their pattern. His life has been mostly given up to destroying competition in the wire and nail business. He wants a fairyland. He’s sent me out here to build him one!”

“Why does he put his fairyland so far from home?”

“Most of them are, aren’t they?”

The girl flashed him a comprehending glance and her eyes laughed. She was meant to laugh!

“You’re to make it, and he’s to think about it.”

“That’s the idea. I’m to send him blue prints and letters and a list of *flora* and *fauna*, and he’s to revel.”

“He has bought Talla Goya?”

“Yes. From a poor chap that seems to have ruined himself over the place. Had to borrow of the consul to get home. I suppose the old man bought it in the first place to help the fellow along, then the notion of working it up took hold of him. Though this Deering——”

“Deering! He never worked.—He threw away Talla Goya—” The laughter was gone.

“You know him?”

“ My father was his partner.”

“ Did Deering divide squarely on the sale? ”

“ It was the top of the mountain my father owned.
That was sold long ago to the Tea Company. Talla
Goya—what is left—wasn’t ours.”

“ Then the river——”

“ Begins on the land of the Oriental Tea Com-
pany.”

“ We must get that back.” West turned his eyes
again upstream. “ I must see that fall.”

“ There is a short way. The river winds here.
I will take you.”

“ I wish you would, now.”

CHAPTER VII

UNEXPLAINED SPEED IN A STEADY PULSE

"ARIADNE herself couldn't have pulled a man out of this labyrinth," West said, as he hacked the wire stems of the jungle vines.

The climb was getting steeper.

"Ariadne would much better have let the lying Theseus be eaten. What was the use of him?" The girl laughed again, but the clambering of the slope demanded a close watch, and she did not look up.

West wished he could see her eyes.

"There are two kinds of men that *ought* to be fed to minotaurs, cruel men and liars." She had stopped in a green gallery of the hill, and West drawing himself up beside her had his wish, but he had forgotten to guard his steps. He slipped, caught at a thorn bush, and the hooked thorn tore his hand, setting a vein to spouting its red blood.

While she bound it, he looked down at the soft abundance of her dark hair and the white temples

underneath. The whiteness, that is sometimes foil for the darkest hair, made the wonder of her eyes seem darker and more strange. The crimson blossoms of the wilderness were no newer to him than the glance she lifted when the task was done.

"The Talla Goya mark," she said. "A thorn in the flesh!"

In the monotonous effort of the ascent, nothing befell them, and their talk was unmemorably simple. Yet West felt as if he were for the first time in a dull existence, living, smothered incubation giving way to freedom and light and air.

He had left camp before the heat of the day was eased. Now the quiet of the island rest was broken by the stir of wild things. In the deeps where the sniffing Penny had disappeared, a myriad creatures were flying, moling, creeping. Their noise sharpened the sense of solitude. It drew West closer to this comrade of the woods, so that the plans he uttered took on the charm of the green caves through which she led him.

The roar of tumbling waters put an end to talk.

"Now!" she cried, mounting breathless to a shelf where the naked roots held the trees to the uncovered rock. Lifting both hands, she pushed aside a thick veil of vivid green picked out with white and blue and red and yellow bloom.

West passed her, and was out upon the crumbling edge of a great chasm gored deep into the moun-

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tain. From above them, where the shallow gorge narrowed to the fall, a smooth flood slipped upon the verge. Far beneath, the dark sides of the beaten pool reverberated to the shock. It was a stupendous fall for a little river.

The girl, watching West, seemed satisfied.

For West, this girl was already the spirit of the stream. And the stream was Talla Goya. It meant a perpetually unscorched and blossoming land; it meant success. To hold and keep it, to protect it from the failure of drought and the possession of others, this should be his achievement.

It was of the river only that he talked.

"Does it ever run dry?" he shouted, as she poised above an untimely death, watching the little float of bark from which he roughly worked out the volume of the flow. They had come a long way in the difficult descent by the bank.

"Sometimes," she answered, and moved unconcerned from one swinging hold to another. "Don't be frightened; these vines are strong."

"Your progress has a suicidal look; I suppose I'm not to offer any——"

"Quite so. It would be wasted." Her smile answered his unfinished sentence.

The sky filled, gloomed at them all in a furious instant, and the wind wrestled and shivered in the tops of the trees. In the darkening of the light, the green seemed greener, the flame of open blossom

and crimson-tipped twig more vivid. The chatter of the monkeys in the wood grew to a clamor.

"We can't escape it. It's later than I knew." The girl glanced at the sky, and left the bank for the wood.

West followed. A swirl of dry petals swept after him.

"It's not a house, but it may serve for an umbrella." She had led him back to the brink of the river. "Come in."

Between two roots of a strange tree, a cave skilfully roofed with a gigantic yellow leaf faced the water. The roots rose in solid walls higher than a man's head, and buttressed a big trunk. West cleared the place of drifted leaves and twigs under which a scorpion might lurk. The girl settled herself on an abutment of the roots, her arms about her knees, and West dropped into the narrow space beside her.

From their cave they could see the river slipping past in a malachite flood. The opposite shore, high and cliff-like, bore mottled orchid sprays dripping among a green sprawl of vines, and cups of climbing lilies bent by the wind against the shaken leaves.

"Were you an old friend of Mr. Riggs?"

"No. Never saw the old man till they sent me to install a plant at his country house. Up the river."

"The Mississippi?"

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“No. The Hudson.”

“That’s near——”

“New York. It’s all the river a New Yorker ever heard of! For an old New Yorker—say a man who’s lived there five years—the universe is bounded on all sides by New York City. No one is ever born in New York you know.”

“I fancy a few die there.”

“That’s about all there is to do there.” West grew confidential. “I’m a rank outsider when it comes to New York as the Only Place. I like a tree and a clean road now and then, and less sweat and vermin and human muck. Ugh! I get sick hearing men talk about New York City. It’s a dump heap, and it crawls.”

The girl laughed with a sound of sheer enjoyment. “You’re talking now about any big city.”

“The woods do suit me better than the towns but—Hello!” A wandroo mother, her baby clinging to her grey neck, had swung down upon a branch and looked in at them. “I suppose that’s why I offered to go up to Dobbs Ferry and get the Riggs plant going. It was my vacation anyway. All clean country up there, and no one bothering about. I hadn’t had such a good time since I was a cub ’prentice. And that was a long time ago.”

“But within the memory of men now living!” She glanced at him quizzically, a laugh glinting under her lashes.

'All at once West felt himself very young. He knew he looked young. He hated that look of youth. It seemed to detract from the value of his experience.

"He's an interesting old fellow, Riggs," he said, answering her only by a grimace. "All his life he's wanted to travel, but says he never could get away from business. Has a library full of maps and globe-trotting books. Knows more about this island to-day—"

The next words were borne down by the roar of the rain. Under the swashing of the flood, the forest shook. The winds fleeing in the high branches made a groaning in the wood behind them, and sent great sheets flung like a tumbling wall between them and the sky. Talk was impossible, and again West was content. Nothing was demanded of him. He could enjoy undisturbed. And to his enjoyment was added a subtle intensity, a deep-breathed satisfaction, that he laid to the newness of his surroundings and the interest of the storm.

The girl's face was toward the river. Her eyes matched the excitement in her quickened breathing. But her body was still, her hands held close upon her updrawn knees.

The consciousness of her enjoyment heightened his own.

West wished the downpour might last for hours; he had met his premonition, and would have pro-

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longed the blessedness of this prelude. But the rain stopped "all at once and all o'er." Thunder still boomed in the gorges; a sound of little rills trickling, dripping, running, filled the whole forest. The sun flamed one gorgeous instant upon a glittering world, then slunk behind the breaking clouds; the rain began again, steady, gentle, drizzling, like garulous widows who display a mitigated grief.

"What trick is this?" asked West. "I knew there would be 'showers in the late afternoon, very cooling and refreshing to the inhabitants'—but this!"

"You're in the mountains." Light still danced in the brown eyes turned to the alert blue of his. Little joyous devils disported where tragedy had hidden itself. "It's going to rain all night."

As they set out once more, the whirr of a startled bird in her face sent the girl stumbling over a root. She twisted her ankle, and with a little cry choked back, clung to West while she regained her balance. She pulled herself upright with so swift a gesture that he had no chance to help her.

"I hope you're not hurt." He spoke in his ordinary tone, but the words sounded remote in his own ears, and his sight was queerly hazy; the instant's dependence of this girl had a sweetness out of all relation with the time he had known her, out of all relation with anything he had ever felt before. "The dependence of the strong is sweeter

than wild honey, and their giving as the giving of great kings." Where had that saying stuck to him? He must get over this idiotic habit of thinking in quotations! He wished she would stumble again.

"Here's your 'brolly.'" She pointed to a giant leaf, and West cut it for her, refusing its companion.

Behind her were crimson stars of the ixora, and pale yellow blooms of the wild lemon, at her feet white troops of jungle lilies; the rain sifting through the trees shone in her hair.

"I call this jolly," said West. "Tell me about yourself. I've done all the talking."

"Where shall I begin? My 'birth and parent—age'? I'll match information. You tell first."

"I was born in Vermont, brought up in Massachusetts, Ohio, and California, and when I was out of Tech., I went to work for the Standard Electric. The 'short and simple annals' of the engineer. Your turn."

"I was born in Bombay, brought up in England, Scotland, and Wales, and two years ago, against his express command, I came out to a sick father at Talla Goya. I suppose Mr. Deering believed we'd gone from Talla Goya long ago."

"Lucky for me you're here!" West pushed back the tattered leaf ribbons that would have flapped their wetness in her eyes. "Your father must know

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this region from *a* to *zed!* Would he give me a hand?"

The girl glowed. It was as if some delicate vase that has seemed merely fine and dainty of hue, were to have a light thrust inside it, and burst into rose-colored fire. West had read somewhere a comparison like that, and thought it overdrawn. Now he knew better.

"He's always believed in Talla Goya, and he's lived here seven years," she answered simply. "His health is better now; he has set a time for going. Perhaps he will not think it wise to stay." A prim defense of her father's dignity of choice was in the last words, but West had seen the glow.

What obscure impulse had made him offer to handicap himself with an unseen man, a man who was more than likely a derelict! What possible excuse had the fellow for hiding in the jungle, keeping a girl like this in a savage solitude!

But, "I need another assistant; you will speak for me?" he asked, and stopped to peer in a half-feigned interest over the river bank. "Is this a crocodile? He seems a bit entangled with the vegetation but I opine he is a croco——"

"Dear no!" The girl peered after West, and as her sleeve brushed the flannel of his shoulder, the same unexplainable hand came out of nowhere and laid its fingers on his pulse.

The slow beast, hoisting himself onward through

the mud of a stagnant backwater, was dragging a mass of golden lilies and great iris blooms.

"Do you raise many six-foot lizards at Talla Goya? I like my pets smaller. Do you remember a primer some ribald person printed to satirize food for the infant mind. A boy clinging to a post was sliding into the water where six crocodiles were waiting. 'See James and his pets,' it said. 'James will soon feed his pets.' My natural history was all acquired in these informal ways."

"So I should imagine."

"I thank you much for that," said West, and gave her his hand from a lofty root to a doubtful hollow.

"I'm sure you're all right, because you know your *Alice*," she announced, as her queerly shod feet struck the spongy earth.

"Glad your doubts are dispelled."

"Mr. Zenas Riggs liked your work."

"That was what I hoped you'd infer. I didn't dare say it myself."

"You do seem a bit timid!" The girl's laughter came often as if it were a welcome luxury.

They had stopped while West untangled her sleeve from a scimitar of a thorn that had caught her. He lingered needlessly over it, his eyes ruminatively on the fold he held. The girl misunderstood and flushed. The fabric was common red tablecloth, faded by careful bleaching to a dull pink.

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West thought it very pretty and feared he had been too familiar. She was such a good chum, this jungle maid, that he had not thought she would be suspicious!

"Riggs," he went on, releasing her sharply, "wants a bungalow here with as much comfort as can be gotten into it, and the place spruced up and landscape-gardened a little, and anything that can be done in the way of development without spoiling the picturesqueness. It's rather a various contract."

"It's a splendid contract! You can do anything with Talla Goya, anything!" Now it was the girl who was sliding from the ways, launched on a congenial theme. Impersonal as she was, aloof like some creature come out of her own wood, she fired West's fancy with new conceptions of his work. As she went on, the swamps below became green rice fields; along the sheltered exposure beyond the old bungalow, cacao shone red and yellow in its leaves; rose gardens and pergolas, such a bungalow as women have dreamed but men never built, grew on the highest terrace in sound of the fall, and a road wound through the tropical splendors of the palms.

"Ah—when I get my water wheels!" he exclaimed.

"And buy back the Tea Company's land——"

"We'll have the finest plantation in the East!"

"Estate! Always *estate* in Ceylon! But you're

a *tender-foot*—isn't that the American?" They were smiling at each other like children building teacup houses in the sand. She had forgotten to be hurt. "You're running the Talla Goya *estate*."

"If I can't run it as well as that Deering——"

"You can't run it worse. He was even stupider than he was bad.—What is that?" She had paused in the way, listening.

"I don't presume to guess! That's your part, the natural history. I stick to the mechanics."

"Lilith perhaps. She's my father's elephant. When we go we shall sell her——"

"You mustn't go. I want—Lilith."

"She has a jolly bungling little calf. Listen—it's not loud enough for Lilith's crashing."

"Does the lady stray about?" West whistled. "If she does I saw her drinking two nights ago—miles below here."

"There are no wild elephants in this neighborhood.—What will the Standard Electric do?"

West made the mental leap from Lilith to New York.

"Without me? I guess the old S. E's worrying along—still doing business. The men gave me a gold scorpion because one more 'bug' wouldn't matter where it would be all bugs, and sent me off without a tear!"

"Cooee! Cooee! West! I say, West! Ravvy, are you dead? Has the cobra got you?

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Cooee! West! Oooooooo—ah! OO—aa—oo—aa—ooooo!” The wilderness rang with a whistle and yell meant to “carry.”

“The fool boy is dead. I might have known it,” groaned a voice in the thicket. A huge bustling and smashing approached with inhuman breathings and weird snortings. A crescendo repetition of opprobrious epithet assailed the astonished ear.

“It wasn’t Lilith!” exclaimed the girl.

“You triple-headed ass—I beg your pardon!” The greeting was divided between West and the girl, as Burden stumbled perspiring into their path. He straightened himself and glanced with deprecation at his leathery elbow revealed by a rent, one of many rents. A vine heavy with trumpet-flowers dragged at his neck; flies and mosquitoes came with him in hilarious swarms.

CHAPTER VIII

AN INTRODUCTION WITH A MYSTERY

BURDEN looked expectantly at West.

"This," said West in answer, "is my friend James Burden. I left him executing high art by the borders of a stagnant water tank where the scum pleased his eye. I promised to cooee frequently, and to return in an hour. Ordinarily Mr. Burden is neat, industrious, modest—of an even temper. Now, Jim, present *me*."

Burden glanced from one to the other but betrayed no amazement. "This boy," he announced, and waved an accusatory hand at West, "is an atrocious liar, as you have heard him admit, and my best friend. His unworthy name is Landon West, and I call him Ravvy because he is so 'reckerless'. You were born in time to hear Erminie? Of course not. For him, because of my inability to break a promise, I have sat waiting one hour and forty minutes over time. I am drenched by the most awful flood I ever weathered; I am bitten to the bone——"

"Not far," interpolated West.

"By vile malarious insects; I am undoubtedly inoculated with *beri-beri* and the plague, and I have fought a Python, in a battle to the death. He was long—and O—portly!" Burden opened his arms to their widest span, elevating his sketching kit in an explanatory gesture.

"You're sure it wasn't an earth-worm? They grow quite immense. You aren't—" The laughing little devils were back in the girl's eyes. It was impossible not to like James Burden.

"I am—I mean I am not. Ananias was not a bachelor. It took Sapphira——"

"We never had Sapphira's version."

"How unorthodox! I'll show you the skeleton if the ants haven't eaten it."

"You hear that, Pen?" The small ant-eater had returned, and on its hind legs was imprinting claw marks of red mud on West's knees. The girl was smiling at both men. The animation of their cheerful nonsense stayed in her eyes. In her smile was something inexplicable, a glow of something hidden, a thrilling undertone of things unsaid. It was new to West. It set him wondering. And with the mystery was the frankness, the look that met his without coyness or withdrawal, the fine friendliness of the fearless and the good.

"I am Marjorie Ellinwood, and my father,

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Major Ellinwood, will be glad to see you at the bungalow. You will come?"

"We will. This evening. At once." Burden's bow was as complete as if it had been accomplished in the halls of his ancestors. "We've been kept off all day by West's chief of staff, who would drink green cocoanut milk and pay tribute——"

"Did you know—" Marjorie Ellinwood's voice touched the edge of reproach. She looked at West, but Burden answered; what he answered West did not hear.

"To-night!" "The bungalow!" Did she dread it or did she rejoice? Surely she needed help in her lone fight. By some predestined clairvoyance, he knew what she resolutely concealed. It would be more agreeable to rescue her from precipices and wild beasts, but if she needed him for danger less glittering with romance, he was ready. He had caught a glimpse of lonely grief, on which he dared not even in his thoughts intrude. And she had been here two years!

"Damned brute," said West to himself as they separated. "Good-bye, then. Till to-night," he added aloud.

"Not a half-breed siren!" murmured Burden reflectively within his mustache.

"What—what's that?" West laid violent hands on his strayed attention.

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“‘What is so rare as a day in June?’” replied Burden, with derisive irrelevance. “‘The little brown hares came leaping.’ And ‘where was Moses when the light went out.’”

CHAPTER IX

TWO ORDINARY BAD MEN WHO WANT MONEY

Two men sat on a hotel veranda at Colombo and studied a list.

"The names are all right. What we need is the water-power!"

"What we need is to keep those names! They won't go on with us if we've got no evidence of something doing."

"So far their little contributions have made us very comfortable."

"Shut up." Both men peered into the street to see if the words had been overheard.

"How about this Deering? Where's his penny?"

"That name's just ornament. Shoved it in and told him it meant ten shares. He put me on to Talla Goya."

"Where'd you find the fellow?"

"Baden-Baden. He used to own Talla Goya. Sold the best water-power in the region to an old

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man named Riggs. This Riggs has sent a young engineer out there to fix him up a private plant. That young man's got practically unlimited capital back of him. And he's one of those Institute, all-theory youths I'm betting you a ton of ice. If I can't handle him I'm greener than I look."

The two bent again over the list headed *Directors of the Lanka Electric Transmission Company.*

"You're pretty sanguine, Raend. If worst comes to worst, we can take what there is and light out."

Raend swore, and hung out from the rail to make a careful survey of the street. Under gay umbrellas late saunterers were ambling beneath the suriyas.

"They look exactly as if the sunset had tumbled on them," a shrill girl-voice was exclaiming.

"Bride and groom. You don't need to rubber at them; they won't listen."

"Other people may. See here, Galbers, you're too fresh, you——"

"O hell—Go on with your plans."

"Don't get off any more guff about running away with the cash then. We're going to make this company go——"

"If we have to steal the water-power! What's the name of this lamb you're going to get going?"

"West, Landon West. He's a good engineer. We'll have the whole thing neat as wax. That Talla

Goya neighborhood's being cleared and opened up. Thirty miles away the settlements are thick as flies."

"Native settlements, without a window in a house. I guess, if they live without daylight they'll manage without electricity!"

"Estates, big estates, where they need a lot of power—irrigation and all the rest of it—if only they knew it. There's where the Lanka——"

"And when the farmers, planter men, whatever you call 'em, begin to kick, we'll be where they shoot the shoots! Poor old directors! I really grieve for those respectable old birds. Cunningham now——"

"You say that kind of thing once too often, and you'll have the Ceylon Observer after you. Get that started, and you're lucky to get away without your baggage." Raend swore again.

"It's too hot to jaw. 'When thieves fall out'—want to be careful, old son!" Galbers yawned. But his little eyes were wide awake. "I'll see Cunningham again, and keep him jollied up. You go after your young lightning-conductor, and get him nailed. Give me the list."

CHAPTER X ,

'A JOVIAL SERPENT

"FANCY!" said the Major. "How extraordinary!"

He did not refer to West's activity, which he had just described to Marjorie as "American celerity" but to the transformation of Talla Goya. He was inspecting the sketch on Burden's knees.

Everything was well under way. On the lowest of the terraces, West's storage lake was nearly finished. Solid walls of chocolate-colored masonry curved from a wide dam like embracing arms.

"'I see Aladdin in his cave,
I follow Sinbad on the shore,'"

hummed Marjorie on the lake wall.

"What's this?" asked West, catching up with her on his tour of inspection.

"A gem of some sort, a sapphire!" Marjorie took the rough stone from his hand and held it against the morning glow.

"Every precious stone but the emerald and the

diamond," volunteered the Major, descending to them, "is found in this island. There's one place where they use ruby dust to make plaster."

"Mr. West acquires so much information when he's with you, Dad dear, that he's a little over-stocked just now! You must give him a day entirely uninstructed!" Marjorie held the sapphire to the light, and the two men came closer to guess its possibilities.

"Quite so," assented the Major. "But he probably needs instruction. I'll warrant me now, you don't know a jacinth from a chrysoberyl!" He looked at West.

"Guilty," acknowledged West. "She's jealous of the attention you're giving my education."

When West had gone on to stir up his dark masons to greater vigor of motion, Marjorie looked up at her father.

"This is like your old plan." Her way with him was always the way of deference. It was plain too that her love for the man was not unjustified. He was a lovable man, showing his best among his kind, not the man for a solitary contest with the jungle.

"Your plan, child. I'm glad of all the electricity I brushed up. Where could—"

"Isn't that color for you?" Burden was shouting at them from under his hot umbrella, and they

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climbed to him up the sides of the earth heap that was later to be a shady lake path.

"So heating to see you hustle," Burden complained daily to West, and daily encased himself in the cocoon to make pictures of the hustle.

The gleaming sky, dark masons with gay rags of clothing and scarlet fez, the amazing foliage beyond, were all in the sketch.

"I tell him," said the Major, "his sky's too blue, and his lake too big. Never pamper these artistic chaps!"

"That's right, Major, keep me the modest flower I am." Burden studied the brown men through his glass. "I can't place those fellows. They have a Semitic cast."

"They should have a Semitic cast; Arabian blood——"

"I'm going, instantly," cried Marjorie in full flight. "It's too warm for facts."

"Fancy's sometimes warmer, and less safe," shouted the Major after her, and Burden smiled.

"You two understand each other," he said.

"We should; we should. We're all there are. Her mother and her little brothers died the same day. I sold out and went home, but the East had got me. I came back. Then I rather went to seed, and I don't suppose I should have brought her out. But she would come. I had no choice. She's a good chum."

Burden was a man to whom other men told things they would not have mentioned to their own souls, if there had been danger of being overheard. He nodded understandingly.

"Yes," he said. "She's a good chum."

"For the Spring and the Middle Summer
Sat each in the lap of the breeze,'"

sang Marjorie, climbing light-footed down the river bank from dam to power-house.

"And the red passion flower to the cliffs
And the dark blue clematis clung;
And starred with myriad blossoms
The blue convolvulus hung.'"

Hinsdale saw her coming, and left his work. The machines were being put in place.

"Funny things, these niggers," he said as he met the girl.

"Don't call them that," she begged promptly. "They might hear you."

"You're worse than West," Hinsdale answered good-naturedly. "I tell you, Miss Ellinwood, it's all nonsense to be so polite to a lot of crazy heathen. Show 'em who's boss, and give 'em enough to eat, and then let 'em alone, I say."

"You'll never finish making Talla Goya if you do that. They're polite themselves, and they resent anything else. Have you seen the village?"

"Don't want to. Our coolie lines are bad enough."

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Hinsdale's manner was still good-natured. He had been in a different humor since the night that introduced them to the old bungalow. An overwhelming interest had kept him from fretting. He seemed to pay little attention to what Marjorie was saying, yet he looked nowhere but at her face, and the blood warmed his own.

"Can you tell me where I can find Mr. West?"

Hinsdale turned. Marjorie looked at the stranger, and left the answering to Hinsdale.

"Who the deuce is that bounder?" From the margin of the lake above, the Major was using Burden's glasses. The man he called *bounder* was, like Hinsdale, massive of build, but, unlike him, jovial of aspect.

"Raend, as I'm a sinner!" exclaimed Hinsdale.

The jovial one had anticipated the other man's words; he was half way across the intervening space, beaming tropically upon the assistant.

"Well, this *is* good. This is *good*," he intoned, wringing Hinsdale's hand with the fervor of profound delight. "I came up to find Mr. West. Never dreamed you were about, old son. What are you up to?"

"I'm in with West on this thing." Hinsdale flushed self-consciously and shrewd eyes marked the flush.

"Of course he'd need an adviser with more experience than his." The new-comer spoke cautiously.

from the corner of his loosely mobile mouth.
“How is West? Sensible?”

Hinsdale hesitated. “O West’s all right. What did you want to see him for?”

“Want him to get in on a good thing. I hope you’ll give him the right shove. I’d like a talk with you before I hit the pike for Colombo.”

“There comes West.” Hinsdale spoke warningly with no apparent reason. The talk fell lower, and the two walked a little way from the river.

West and the Major were moving along the bank toward Marjorie, who had descended to the power-house floor. She no longer wore the Indian cloth skirt and the pink table-cloth waist, but a trimmer costume brought from some careful hiding.

“Gets her natty way of putting on her clothes from her mother,” the Major had confided to Burden. “I was fairly well set up myself till the climate—I tell you the tropics take it out of a man.”

“You’re going it a bit too strong,” he was saying now to West. “You don’t rest when it’s time for rest.”

The Major’s eyes were less watery than when West had seen him rising, red-faced, courtly, but tremulous, from his chair on the bungalow veranda. He stood more nearly erect, his hand was steadier.

“You work at night,” he finished anxiously.

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"I sleep like a top."

"I know better. This weather breeds dreams."

The Major shook his head.

West flushed suddenly. If he dreamed it was more of Marjorie than of work.

As they stopped beside her, Marjorie's gaze came down from the crane. Goddewana, cool and placid in a white comboy and a spotless jacket, broke off the explanation he was giving, and effaced himself. The brown men pulling in groups on an armature frame laughed their gentle, musical laughter, as it swung pendulum-wise in mid-air, then sank upon the solid tons of the concrete foundation.

West sprang to the rescue; the thing wasn't true. Where was Hinsdale? He looked about, saw the man who should have had his eye on this adjustment, and his lips pressed tighter as he set about the labor of getting things straight.

"I've been down beyond those trees that bear potato blossoms. I believe you're right about the cotton, Major," he called between commands. He had gripped the swinging field magnets, and was steadyng them to place.

Marjorie's presence seemed to introduce no alien element into his work. From the beginning she had been the companion of every step. At times, when he had feared the native *appu* was slighting labor directed out of sight of the power-house and

lake that were his own headquarters, he had found Marjorie watching, her sewing in her hand, her approval encouraging the flattered overseer to loftier endeavor.

Burden's interest was all for a jungle untamed. Every thorn tree rooted out seemed to him a vandalism; the very thought of electric lights in the wilderness, to be born of a philistine devil. Hinsdale cared nothing for a labor that was to bring more credit to West than to himself. Even the Major would have been betrayed now and again by his long habit of sloth, if Marjorie had not kept his hand to the plow. But Marjorie never failed.

As West worked, he knew that her expression had relaxed from the look of solitary pain that had earlier haunted his thoughts. The engines were beginning to take shape.

"Ah," she said. Her breath came deep after a long-held inspiration. The dynamos in the Talla Goya power-house were to her more than cold metal. They stood for emancipation.

Her look flashed from the machinery to the man who stood beside it, working out his will through this little army of the brown men, already malleable, obedient, willing instruments to his hand. The little frown of concentration between his eyes seemed to focus their glance upon the workman he singled for a command, and the man listened, magnetized to attention. West at work was not his

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own; he served a master more imperious than himself. The invisible ideal that for him measured the achievement of each hour, was a sterner task-master than he could ever be to his men.

"Come and see the machines," he called to Marjorie.

The Major had been drawn off by Hinsdale and the apparition he had hailed as *Raend*.

"Goddewana is one in a thousand. I am going to make a good electrician of him." West looked at his swarm of workmen.

Woodworkers were busy with preparation for the walls. On stout corner columns a Singhalese artist was cunningly setting devil charms to scare the river demons.

"I don't blame these men for not wanting to work. Why on earth should they! Part of a cocoanut tree, and they've got it all!"

"The hardest worker can always excuse the idle! The people who only work because they have to, are the ones that never forgive the lazy." Marjorie's eyes were on Hinsdale, but she turned them quickly away.

"The real old grubber probably wonders why he does it, whether the other chaps haven't the best of it!—Now why can't I be an Island Apollo and run off to some palmy shore where the surf is soothing and lie on my back and attain Nirvana? That's the method as nearly as I can make out.

I should want to carry you off, of course, to share the cocoanuts."

" You wouldn't have any cocoanuts to share! It takes an expert to climb eighty feet along a swinging pole into the sky and bring down his dinner! If you'd been an Apollo like Siwwá there you'd have been tied up in more conventions than we ever heard of. You'll have to screen this place, or the monkeys will be experimenting with your lightning."

" I shall." West gave the signal for rest, and the men fell prone, sleeping in the shade almost before the word had left the air. It was still morning, yet the sun was fervid, growing rapidly merciless. The smell of new-sawn wood mingled itself with the sugar-and-spice odors of the Ceylon forest. Lively parakeets ringed with red flashed in and out of the green thicket, their chatter a harsh foil for the milder murmur of the men.

Something in the rapidly maturing world about him, the sense of tremendous fertility, seemed to West to be matched by the violence with which his soul and his senses had lived in the past weeks. His face was older, his grip on his impulses tightened to mate a fierce expansion of his spirit that would have vented itself in day-dreams, in lawless imaginings, untrammeled as the wood. But the habit of repression, the ardor of his task, all wrought with a virile and wholesome will to keep

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straight the direction of his suddenly turbulent soul. Steadying, too, was Marjorie's comradeship.

He looked a little ruefully at his hands that were the worse for his labors. "How am I to get on with my Singhalese while you are away?" His eyes lifted to hers in a glance filled with the shock of all he was suppressing.

"Get Goddewana to teach you the alphabet! Mr. Hinsdale wants to join the Singhalese class."

"Very laudable of Hinsdale." West sent a look in the direction of his assistant. The first shade of a jealous fear fell on his thoughts. But it was a light shadow. "Will you go over the Colombo purchases with me this evening?" he asked. "Your father and I are going to decide on the number of men we shall need for the cacao. It's brutal to ask you to do all this shopping. Colombo will be hot too."

"You know——" The warm brown of her eyes darkened.

"West!" Hinsdale was calling. "West, come here."

"All right," West answered. "Come over here, can't you?" He set the brushes a little closer on the commutator, and waited. He did not choose that the men should see him summoned to meet casual intruders at Talla Goya. "It's not going to be right,—here, without my chum," he said in an undertone to Marjorie. "I don't like it." The

humorous twist saved the words from sentimentality. The little mischievous devils in Marjorie's eyes laughed back at him with a child's look of joy, but Marjorie did not speak. She went to join her father, as Hinsdale brought his friend to West.

"The fellow has a favor to ask, and a dirty favor at that. I wish he were in Kamschatka." West had for spectators of his partly worked-out conceptions a distaste shared with other creative artists.

Hinsdale presented the new-comer with an encomium, and made haste after the Major and his daughter.

"I've asked Raend to stay till to-morrow.—Then he can go down with Marjorie and the Major," he turned to say.

"I wouldn't let Major Ellinwood hear you mention his daughter by her first name," West commented quickly.

Hinsdale thought the answer smacked of authority and patronage; his vanity, always alert for a slight, raged that the words should have been spoken before a man he wanted to impress.

The Major had taken Marjorie away, the old conservative instinct rising to forbid her meeting this strange person in the happy-go-lucky freedom of the work camp.

Raend came to business with every appearance of frankness.

"You're using American apparatus, Mr. West."

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"Yes," West answered, "I brought it with me."

"None better." Raend squinted at the name plates.

"There's lots of room for American enterprise out here. You know the Lanka Electric?"

"Don't think I do." West's eyes were on the jovial face of the visitor, but he could see beyond where Hinsdale was giving a hand to Marjorie Ellinwood across a log.

"Lanka Electric's got the brains and the capital. It's going to own the Island. Lanka—old name for Ceylon, you know. We've got big men and a strong push and a stronger pull. We're going to let you in, Mr. West, right in the proscenium box. We want your name."

"What use could my name be to you? I'm installing a private plant out in the woods."

"You don't need all your power on this little place; what better can you do for Zenas Riggs than set it to doing some outside work?" Raend unfolded as much of his plan as he dared. "Zenas Riggs would jump at it."

"What makes you think so?"

"I know him. He never lost a chance like this, yet. He'd take every share he could lay hands on." Riggs's full name Raend had secured from Hinsdale. He felt the fates played into his plans; he was doing well! With growing confidence his manner waxed more familiar. "Why, my dear

fellow, see here."—He wandered on, trolling his siren song into a neatly worded labyrinth of figures and results. He even betrayed the outline of a plot by which an established Colombo company could be killed, and the corpse taken over to be reanimated as Lanka Electric. In the midst of this exposition West faced his visitor.

"Why do you tell me this?"

"Because I expect you to go in with us. Your name's not so obscure as you think. Riggs wrote out to the Governor about you. You'd be received anywhere."

"And what would happen to my job down here?"

"O while you rooted a little for Lanka Electric, Hinsdale would keep things going. There are a thousand excuses for slow work in the tropics. As I was saying——"

"Don't say it."

Raend's face grew instantly ugly. Its joviality had gone. A jovial face turned ugly is uglier than any other.

"You mean?"

"I wouldn't touch Lanka Electric with tongs."

"You've wormed a good deal out of me before you said so. It's lucky that I told you nothing not made up on the spot to see what sort of a man we were getting."

"Very lucky. If I ever have any influence in

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this Island it will go to the old company at home. I've listened to you because you are a friend of Hinsdale's. He'd turn you down soon enough if he knew how you'd used his introduction."

" You think he would."

" I know he would. You and I can't talk business, Mr. Raend."

" The inducement's not——"

" I'm not for sale, and Talla Goya's not for hire. You'll find Hinsdale at the camp. Siwwá!" West would not break the Island tradition and neglect a guest; the wayfarer, though a Raend, is to be fed and sheltered. " Show Mr. Raend where to find the cigars, and tell Ponayeh to do his best. The gentleman will be hungry and thirsty."

" Al'righ'," responded Siwwá respectfully.

Raend chewed his lips as he followed his guide. " Hmp!—Fooled on the all-theory man!" he grunted. But the end was the thing. He could be angry enough later. " Cut out West, and that leaves Hinsdale. Wish I *could* cut out West!" He swore with cold deliberation and fell silent, his mind at work.

CHAPTER XI

“GOD SEND US A TRUSTY CHUM”

“DON’T let Raend know we don’t own the top of the mountain.” West warned Hinsdale hastily, making a moment in spite of Raend’s efforts to be always present. “Can’t think what’s holding back the Tea people. They aren’t using the land.”

Raend was instantly upon them and Hinsdale made no reply. The camp was now a temporary bungalow, a long room with ceiling cloth above, and partitions below that divided the barrack into four rooms, one for each man, and a living-room.

The Ellinwoods had bemoaned the comparative comfort of the old bungalow.

“It doesn’t seem right,” Marjorie had said.

“It will amount to the same thing,” Hinsdale had answered. “West’s a great social light. He’ll be here all the time. Mere men never did satisfy him.”

Hinsdale’s speeches were laid by West to an in-born capacity for bungling. In some fashion they

always managed to suggest that West's comradeship had been given to many women.

At the first of them, Marjorie had lifted an inquiring glance; she had associated West with work, not women. In the peculiar position in which she found herself, she always kept to the impersonal; neither Hinsdale nor West found her communicative on themes not connected with Talla Goya and the abstract.

Before the discussion of the purchases had been finished, and the evening well begun, Hinsdale appeared, bringing Raend to the bungalow. West grew indignantly silent, and the Major's welcome was tempered by reserve. While he and West returned to their estimates, Marjorie kept the desultory talk from lapsing, giving a word now and then to assure the garrulous Raend and the equally garrulous Hinsdale of an audience.

Hinsdale was pleased. West, he thought, was plainly jealous. The interest that had kept him in better humor of late had been the sudden passion that had seized him at his first meeting w'ih the girl to whom the night and the moonflowers had introduced him. The flame of her vitality struck him as something new and amazing in the history of her sex, and the lover's sense of the uniqueness of the loved one, in a measure, revealed itself to him. But it was not the real Marjorie, it was only the vigor of her slender body, the swift flash

of her eyes, the sharp tremble of her lips at the sight of pain, the motions of her speaking hands, the pulse that beat in the dim blue vein at her temple, the white chastity that encompassed the whole, that tempted him.

The love that finds satisfaction in service, was as hopelessly outside his ken as the subtlety that would have set some men to feigning it: So it was West who lingered over the chess-board with the Major, or walked the veranda with him on restless nights till the older man could go safely into the house and to sleep. It was Hinsdale who took the place by Marjorie's side and watched her till, bothered by something torrid in his smile or his nearness, she moved and changed her occupation.

"Sing, Miss Ellinwood," he begged to-night as the four (Burden had thoughtfully left them to their estimates and lists) endured the heat of lights inside the house. "Sing the lily song."

"You sing; I'll play for you, Mr. Hinsdale." Marjorie had picked up her curious mandolin-like instrument. The man's voice rolled out sonorous and effective. He was moved by the fierce heat of the night, by the presence of a new auditor, by a stronger feeling than he had ever before encountered. He sang well. West, who until this hour had never heard anything in Hinsdale's voice to suggest feeling, understood, and a pang of that jealousy attributed to him stabbed him sharply.

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Hinsdale was considered handsome by many besides Hinsdale himself. "With his head of an Apollo and his body of a Hercules, he ought to be irresistible," one woman had said, underscoring the *ought*. His lack of success with women, in spite of the testimony of his glass, was to Hinsdale one of the rankling bitternesses of the past. He was pleased that Raend was present to see him make himself agreeable to a girl whose charms were unmistakable.

Marjorie's face, beautiful alike in its color and in its lack of color, bent over the strings in a quiet absorption that might have been a tribute to the singer. When he finished, she set him adrift upon another melody. This time West's eyes neglected the Major, till he feared they might be eloquent to Raend and Hinsdale, and turned them back to the prints and figures on the table. The jealous stab still bled in him, and in the silence after Hinsdale's voice had ceased, he asked quickly: "Is there any music for 'Where would I be when I come to die'?" and in an instant would have inflicted on himself a literal stab to have unsaid the words. It was not there, not with Raend and Hinsdale about, that he would have heard her sing them. And he had been glad that she would not sing at Hinsdale's asking!

"I think so—let me see!" She showed no feeling that matched his own.

"That's right," cried the Major. "She won't sing it to me because the music is hers. She was working it out only yesterday, when I caught her and she stopped." Marjorie's color, burning deep to a passionate blush, warned the Major that he had blundered.

"I hate to be dragged to the light of day like that." She covered the blush with a quick look of mock anger at the Major. "I'm not at all sure that I can remember it, but it's not so rare a gem that it won't bear a little spoiling." She surveyed the room with a humorous deprecation so natural that West thought disappointedly that she did not mind after all.

"I'm not even certain that I remember the words," she preluded, touching the strings, and sang, in the voice that had come out of the dark the night they had arrived at Talla Goya.

"Somewheres anigh my chum," pleaded the song, begging the boon old as the world. And, "*God send us a trusty chum,*" ended the singer. Her glance traveling about the room, maintaining the half-smiling look that had met the Major's words, came to West. Again West was off his guard. It seemed incredible that she should not know what impulse had moved him to ask for the song, what he must be feeling as he heard it. He did not think the glance would rest on him, and in the eyes he fixed on her, was no concealment. But

Marjorie had looked at Hinsdale and at Raend and at the Major, her lips a little parted, her smile chiding and deprecatory, and now she looked at West. The blush came again, and as it came, for an instant—quickly gone as the flicker of a leaf shadow, she gave back West's gaze in an answer of unmistakable light.

Hinsdale was not swift enough of mind to catch the look, but the blush he saw. His own face darkened with a rush of furious blood. This man who had carried off honors he would gladly have had, friendships he would gladly have made, was poaching now on this preserve he had set aside for his own romance of the tropics! Till now it had not occurred to him that a man could be in love with a woman, and treat her with the equal comradeship West gave Marjorie. To him love was something predatory, greedily pursuing. He felt suddenly deceived, betrayed. Why, he had decided to marry this girl! Unconventional she might be, and the father was an objection, but he wanted her, and he meant to marry her. And now West—again West! What malign fate had sent him to Ceylon with West!—the man who had climbed and passed him, the man who was such a fool he didn't even know that the men he passed were sure to hate him!

'At home he had liked West while he hated him. The things to which he attributed West's success,

qualities of fineness and high consideration for others, were pleasing, but to his view womanish. He had for them the contempt which the ditch digger often holds for the artist. To West's devotion to work, he gave no credit. His own comparative indolence would have been no bar to preferment, he was sure, if he had had West's "ways".

Here at Talla Goya he had hated West for a fresh reason. The Island had worked in Hinsdale the miracle of growth that is its effect on many; only his growth had been the rank growing of weeds, the pressing up of things that in the past had been hidden under nobler crops. Why should West escape, as he appeared to escape, from what tortured his betters? The *appu*'s daughter, Anitchi, lifting her great soft eyes with a childlike adoration as West passed, a childlike adoration tinged with the too early knowledge of the Orient, West had not even seen. But Hinsdale had, not knowing that what helped to make his own undoing, shielded West with fire.

When they had left the bungalow Raend made an excuse of a forgotten tobacco pouch to return. He longed to discover whether or not the Major were accessible, to prepare the way for the next day, when he meant to join the two on their journey to the coast.

His reception was even more tempered than at first. The Major was alone on the veranda.

"I suppose we're starting early?"

"Mr. West thinks we cannot be ready to start; we shall defer our journey till another day," the Major explained stiffly. "I shall be busy here tomorrow."

Raend bit the inside of his lips, and his muscular hands twitched at the completeness of his dismissal.

"I'm sorry for that. Shall I have the chance to say good-bye to Miss Margie?"

"I will convey your good-bye to Miss Ellinwood," the Major answered with military promptness, in a tone that said, "Bounder," and that Raend understood.

"I suppose West's keeping the Major here so he can make love to the daughter." Raend made his comment to Hinsdale as he overtook him in the path; he was smartingly aware that his lack of breeding had protruded beyond the usual veneer; the directors of the Lanka Electric had never seen the real Raend.

"West's engaged to a girl at home," replied Hinsdale shortly.

"O he is!" Raend's words were overweighted with suggestion.

"Certainly." This was a thing Hinsdale felt he could make true if he repeated it often enough. "He'd know better than to annoy Miss Ellinwood."

"She didn't seem annoyed when they said good-night."

"What do you mean?"

"West went back, like myself. Only he had a better reason."

Hinsdale did not answer. He was himself afraid of the fury that controlled him. It did not occur to him that Raend might lie. He had known him slightly, very slightly, not enough, even if he had been an astuter person than John Hinsdale, to perceive that Raend had never lacked for corroborative facts, the man's difficulty being the masterly use of those his fancy created.

Before Raend finished his farewells on the next morning, he had planted a succession of poisoned points in Hinsdale's bosom. Hinsdale perceived that his recent acceptance of West's good fellowship had been too complaisant; such good fellowship only covered contempt for a less successful man! Even Raend could see it!

"He owes everything he is to me. I gave him his first position," he allowed himself to say. Yet, for the Lanka Electric, he had no better word than at the beginning.

"I must own, Raend," he replied pompously to a final appeal, "that it would be unwise and not precisely square for us to go into it. We can't do any active booming of a rival of the old company, even if we could get Riggs's consent to the use of his water-power and money."

"Well you know best. It's a disappointment

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to me." In words Raend accepted the situation. He let his round face show the disappointment. "You've got a more far-seeing mind than West. You're more the financier. I think you're rather overdoing the loyalty act. But I can admire it, even when it cuts me out. The Old Man used to say, you know, that you'd never get on, because you wouldn't climb on garbage."

This rhetorical flight would have much amazed the "Old Man" of the Standard Electric. The highest praise he had ever bestowed on Hinsdale was, "The man's the worst good-engineer I ever employed. Thinks every order an insult." But the artlessness of the appeal to the sorest spot in Hinsdale's spirit was as apparently ingenuous as the grieved shadow on Raend's round face.

"I never did see how a man could be hail-fellow-well-met with everything that comes along, though I own it's a great boost in his profession," purred Hinsdale. "West's young. It's pleasanter to be a favorite than to come right out with opinions that offend somebody. But after a man's a man, he has to assert himself."

"Yes, after a man's a man, he has to be one. I hope your conscience will get after you for turning down an old friend. Mighty glad to have seen you again, Hinsdale." And Raend went.

"Pompous ass! As if 'twasn't West had all the conscience in the bunch! He's too easy," he

grunted as he trotted his horse down the bullock path. "But he'll do nothing for me unless his vanity gets a bigger blow. Jealousy of the girl's the thing." He wheeled his horse.

"Hinsdale!"

"Yes?" Hinsdale came to the camp door eating persimmons.

"How much power can you get out of this place?"

"On a pinch about all we want. We're starting on twelve thousand horse-power. When we've bought the top of the mountain so we can control the stream—"

"Who owns the top of the mountain?"

"The Oriental Tea Company."

"Much good may it do 'em. Good-bye, old man."

Even in his besotted self-centeredness, Hinsdale had seen the light that had flared across the round face at the revelation. West's warning came back to him.

"Hang it!" he said, "West can't expect child-like obedience from a grown man! He gave me no reason for that order." Then the memory of Raend's words about the goodnight to Marjorie stung through suspicions of slight to himself. If West should slip up here at Talla Goya, perhaps some of the infatuated great ones at home who saw promise of distinction in a man not half Hinsdale's

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equal, would have their eyes opened! Perhaps if West flunked it, there might be a chance for another man to show them how it should be done. "No mollycoddling these damn niggers," he ended, and kicked involuntarily at the little brown boy tumbled asleep on a low slab of stone beside the camp door. The child woke with a terrified cry and scuttled away. The child's mother, seeking her small one, saw the kick.

Down the village road Raend trotted gaily. "West and that ex-soak of a Major—thought they'd done it, eh!" he snarled. Hinsdale's had not been the only vanity trodden on. "We'll see, Mr. West, what you'll do without your river!"

CHAPTER XII

A FORCE WITH WHICH ENGINEERING CANNOT COPE

SHE will be here to-morrow. To-morrow! Hours must go by before to-morrow!

West bent frowning over his mildewed paper. He was writing a letter.

“By feeding this artificial lake from the river by pipes laid in the pools in the bed——”

To-morrow! What an interminable time away was to-morrow! West slapped at the biting gnats and shooed the circle of infant moths that obscured his lamp. Sweat ran into his eyes and blinded him; insects buzzed in increasing swarms on the other side of his screens, shrilling with envy of their brothers busied about West’s face and hands.

“Sinasamy!”

There was no answer.

“Asleep. He’s in luck, better stay there,” growled the man over the letter. “Biff—one less devil!”

“One less in a few trillion trillions,” murmured

Burden from the other side of the partition. "I'm off for Kandy to-morrow. Ravvy, I've got to cool off."

"*Off and off*—well, off with you, Jimmy. Show your sense. I'll have things for you to do in Kandy. The Tea Mogul may be there—Park-Denby. I've stirred up the Tea Company till they squeal. Something's got them skittish, just when I thought the thing was nailed. Find out when the Honorable's coming out. If he's there send me word. They'll know about him at Kandy. Get hold of some one. Whizz the message if Park-Denby's in sight. I'd like to meet him beyond the breakwater, before they muddle up his intellect with lies."

"Not easy to roil those waters. Pretty clear," Burden answered.

"So I understand. Wish he'd come. I can't wait. It's more important than a dozen power-houses. Find out for me, Jim."

"Faithful Fido will sleuth about a bit. Don't you worry, Lan." Burden tossed and snored. West returned to his letter. The look he had evoked when Marjorie had sung the "trusty chum" came between him and its pages. What was this thing that had him by the throat, that held him at its will, soul and mind and body, in the pain of an unbelievable blessedness? If other men had felt it, why had no one been able to put it into words?

Worship, service, adoration, tenderness, longing—in the miserable discomfort of the night he forgot himself utterly, and like a dried sponge lain hitherto in some stuffy warehouse, felt the waters of a great inundation expand his spirit.

His pen moved again. "I have enough of the Portland cement, that we brought up, to build sluices and repair the old water tanks——"

Where was she now? West dropped the pen and mopped the bitten skin of his forehead where blood was trickling. Was she thinking of—Talla Goya?

"Where's Hinsdale?" Burden was awake again.

"Don't know." Hinsdale's evenings seemed to be spent in moonings elsewhere. These absences bothered West, but as yet he had no proof that they were spent dangerously for Talla Goya.

"Why don't you come along to Kandy?" Burden was still wider awake. "You'll be a long time dead after this place has killed you."

"No I shan't—get eaten too quick. Lucky not to be eaten alive."

"What are you doing?"

"Writing to Riggs."

"Tell him his fairyland has plenty of fairies, all biting."

"I've had a little experience in the irrigation district on the Pacific Coast," went on the letter, "and it comes in rather handy now. The Pelton

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turbine I ordered appeared on time. I can mount the generators already here on one wheel shaft, and we ought to be ready to start up in another week. The steam plant will be in on the next P. and O. It won't be needed except for drought and emergencies."

Suppose, after all, the look had meant nothing. Had even been due to Hinsdale's presence!

"I enclose a copy of the specifications for material, that it might be well to file in a climate where mildew doesn't devour commercial bond."

Perhaps it had been only embarrassment caused by his own too great intimacy of gaze!

"Talla Goya's going to be the great—" West glanced down the page of his letter, grunted disgustedly, and tore it up to begin again.

"What ho! Within there!" The Major's voice.

The letter was sealed, addressed, and wrapped from mould and ants. West had just risen from his mosquito-haunted task. At the first word he flung himself through his fragile barriers of net, and was out in the flower-scented night, his pulses leaping in his lean body.

"Home!" cried the Major, panting as he slid from the weary beast he bestrode. "Home from a foreign shore! Come up to the bungalow and brew us a squash, West. We perish with thirst."

West's answer was not entirely articulate. But

it was satisfactory. The ring of his voice was welcome. He had sprung to Marjorie's saddle, and she put her hands on his shoulders to jump. The horse, pricked by some sudden electricity of motion, shied sharply and threw her into West's arms. Delight striking on harsh exhaustion after a long day's labor, had shaken West's control. As he set her on her feet, he knew she must have felt the pounding of his pulse, and he tormented himself with trying to remember whether or not the word that had rung in his soul had said itself aloud.

Hinsdale, coming late from his clandestine wanderings, saw the three through the lighted windows of the bungalow, and felt himself shut out, forgotten. Love as he knew it, made wilder by the loose rein he gave to passion, threw him into a strangling rage of hate.

In one thing he was right. West had for that hour forgotten him.

CHAPTER XIII

ZENAS RIGGS TAKES A HOLIDAY: THE SNARE IS SPRUNG

"MOTHER!" Virginia Wakeman spoke imperiously. "There's a Mr. Riggs on this boat. Do you suppose it can be Landon West's Mr. Riggs?"

Mrs. Wakeman looked at her daughter languidly, but a dull color showed in her pallid cheeks. "I'm sure I don't know. Where's the passenger list?"

Virginia's mother sat up painfully on the edge of the berth where she had spent a somber morning, and pulled her bag from underneath. In conditions trying even to the youngest, Mrs. Wakeman was well favored. Yet in the light from the port-hole reflecting a gleam from the ocean outside, she looked her age, and her age was not inconsiderable.

The intentness with which she let her eyes follow the line of names suggested a suddenly roused interest in her daughter's communication. But neither deceived the other. Virginia had known

before they sailed that they were choosing their steamer, if indeed they were not going abroad, solely because Zenas Riggs was to be a passenger on the Parthian.

Mrs. Wakeman had been at the pains to confirm the newspaper announcement, by a visit with a plausible excuse to the Company's offices. Virginia on her own account had surreptitiously called up Mr. Riggs's business number, the day before sailing, and inquired under an assumed name whether Mr. Riggs could be seen on the following Friday.

"Mr. Riggs sails on the Parthian to-morrow," had been the reply. "He can make no further appointments."

Yet Virginia peered over her mother's shoulder with an air full of curiosity.

"Wouldn't it be a coincidence!" she exclaimed.
"'Rathbone—Mrs. Redfern and maid—Reynold—Reynolds—Reynolds—' What a family! 'Remington'—Here it is. 'Zenas Riggs'!" A plainly triumphant glance fastened on the colored folder. Mrs. Wakeman was content with the situation.

Before evening she was established in her chair on deck, but her chair had been moved after a succession of ruthless efforts, and stood next but one to the chair of a white-haired, fresh-colored man who was by no means so old as to be venerable.

His face was lined harshly, his forehead broken

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by two deep crevasses that radiated with an almost weird disregard for symmetry from the close space between his eyebrows. The eyebrows were white like his hair, and stopped short without dwindling before they could meet. When he talked he lifted the right one outward and upward, making of it a sharp interrogation that inquired rather of the universe at large than of the man to whom he spoke. But his grey eyes were not impersonal, nor was there any tendency to vague speculation in the way the under lip clamped against the upper. Mrs. Wakeman felt that she could cope with the eyes, but she was a little doubtful of the jaw. It was like Virginia's, only more bony.

Mrs. de Peyster, in the chair between the two, kindly performed the introduction. Mrs. de Peyster's social pedestal had been erected so many years before her birth, that she could afford to know lesser people than the Wakemans, and newer ones than millionaire Riggs.

Virginia, pacing the deck with a young Englishman straight from an ill-fated Colorado ranch, saw the introduction, but she gave the Englishman's Iliad of cattle an air of sweetly sympathetic attention easily attainable by those who have no sympathies to interfere with the artistic effect.

The sunset trailed its glory wastefully in the waves, and the wind frisked in spurts; the music of the ship's band mingled itself with the breeze

and with the rush of impotent waters spurned by the bow. Late diners came laughing up the companion way, and from end to end of the long promenade, children danced and chattered, and grown-ups chattered and tramped.

"Haven't had such a good time since I went bass fishing in Hackett's Pond!" confided Mr. Riggs.

"Indeed, how delightful," replied Mrs. de Peyster perfunctorily, adding that she believed she'd go to bed and hope for the best. A de Peyster can afford to speak the words that come first. Mrs. Wakeman offered salts, but Mrs. de Peyster went; the other woman suspected her of subterfuge and a desire to escape, but satisfaction glowed in Mrs. Wakeman's manner, as her neighbor rose.

"God helps those who help themselves," thought the mother of Virginia, as Zenas Riggs transferred himself to Mrs. de Peyster's chair, and stretched his legs peacefully into the wind. He was in the mood for companionship. Holiday-making required it.

"She's a handsome girl," was his blunt comment on Virginia before he said good night. Virginia had paused casually in her progress, to inquire tenderly for her mother's comfort, and had been presented.

"She's a dear *good* girl," murmured Mrs. Wakeman, almost believing her own words, Virginia had

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so aptly chosen the moment of arrival, and so prettily acknowledged the presentation.

Mr. Riggs's eyes had followed the young woman with evident pleasure.

There was no place in Europe, America, or the isles of the sea where Virginia's clothes would not have been charmingly distinguished. In the ocean dusk she had not only the subdued and accustomed air of style, but she had the attraction of young girlhood. What her mother called the histrionic gift of the Wakemans lent a soft ingenuousness like a veil to hide the hard glint of Virginia's expression. Though for Mrs. Wakeman no veil existed, she was shrewd enough to see its value for others.

"Poor child." Mrs. Wakeman sighed. "She has been very unhappy. I am hoping a good deal from this voyage. I think she seems better already."

"Fine thing, a sea voyage," said Mr. Riggs non-committally. Holidays are not made for listening to others' woes.

Mrs. Wakeman, wise in her generation beyond the daughters of light, changed the subject, and zealously amused Zenas Riggs till the stars were out.

"Mrs. de Peyster tells me you don't often allow yourself a holiday." Virginia's mother had waited three days to direct her work toward a climax.

The deck and the sunset were the same. There was no breeze.

"First vacation in forty years. Always meant to take them. Believe in vacations. Make my young chaps get out into the woods once a year. Takes the cockiness and meanness out of 'em. I don't suppose," Mr. Riggs twisted his lips and twinkled his eyes lazily, "I should have made it now, but I seemed to have gone what the boys call *stale*, couldn't do a day's work without laying down in the sharves."

"Now you'll let business alone and give all your time to rest. It's a pity they invented the wireless. I'm afraid you've been getting messages about stocks already." Mrs. Wakeman shook her head playfully.

"Wireless don't bother me. When my man gets to wireless messages, I'll answer, 'Use your judgment.' He'll take the hint."

"It is so much more sensible to work while you work, and play while you play."

"Just so."

"But you men are so easily tempted from the narrow path of pleasure!" Mrs. Wakeman smiled indulgently into the afterglow. "You go to Europe to rest, and at the first sight of a big manufactory, or a financial scheme, you're backsliding. I'd be willing to warrant you have some project or other in your head at this minute, that you

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mean to arrange before you return." Her laugh was comfortably lazy, and Mr. Riggs responded to it. He was enjoying his play day with large zest. The capacity for play had not atrophied in Zenas Riggs.

"I don't deny your insight, ma'am. But it's only partly right here." He raised his arms and clasped his hands behind his white head, breathing a noble breath of the sea air. "Now I tell you there's life in that," he interpolated. Mrs. Wakeman looked anxious in the dusk.

"I'm not going to muss around with any business, but I've got a bit of interest out in Ceylon—" Mrs. Wakeman's look relaxed—"and I shall drop in and see what's doing. If it hadn't been for that, I doubt if I should have had the gumption to start. But it's all play—all play. I've got a young engineer out there that knows more about it in a minute than I could in a month. He's a marvel, that boy. Wish he was mine." The great nail-maker was forgetting Mrs. Wakeman, and talking to himself. Mr. Riggs was, as Virginia and Virginia's mother knew, a bachelor.

"I believe I have a certain interest in your Ceylon enterprise," she said after a pause. Subterfuge would have to be good to deceive this man. It must wear at least the cloak of frankness. She thought quickly.

"I looked you up in the steamer list, when I

found there was a Mr. Riggs aboard. If you are Mr. Zenas Riggs, your boy must be our Landon West."

"You know West!" The old man lifted his head turtle-wise and regarded her suddenly. "If you do, you know about as fine a young fellow as we grow."

Mrs. Wakeman was conscious that Mr. Riggs was holding her under the inspection of the eyes, even while his voice drawled. But the afterglow had gone, and the muscles of her face were trained. Again she thought fast.

"To tell the truth——" She hesitated. "It is not a very nice confession for a mother, but I was the means of making Mr. West very unhappy just before he sailed. I felt my Virgie was too young to decide her life—and there was another; one of our old friends was very devoted to her and was much better established." She paused. Zenas Riggs continued to listen.

"I was very arbitrary, and Virginia was quiet," went on the mother with a little tremble of excitement that might have passed for regret. "That was her father's way, to say little but never give up. Of course a mother can't endure long to have her children really unhappy. We're going to the East. I suppose before we come back I shall know my only child's going to settle for life in a swamp in the

tropics." The excitement lent heavily to the final outburst.

"Tush, woman!" There was a little excitement also in the tone of Zenas Riggs. "You couldn't keep West in a swamp. He won't stay put. Your girl has sense, and you'd better encourage it. Good thing for a man to marry young. Always meant to myself.—So that was why he—Hm!" Zenas Riggs meditated. Again he studied under half-opened lids the outlines of Mrs. Wakeman's face.

"I must know your girl," he said.

"She's a very happy girl. She seems to have no doubt of her lover's good faith. I only hope she is right." Mrs. Wakeman sighed like one still unreconciled.

"I'll risk him." Mr. Riggs rose. There was no age in his movements. "Thank you for your confidence, ma'am. I think I'll walk around a while. Can I do anything for you? Pillows?"

"Nothing, thank you. You've done a great deal for me; you've reassured me."

Mr. Riggs went. Mrs. Wakeman lay back in her chair, and reviewed her words. "I've been too quick," she worried, "but I didn't dare to wait after he said *Ceylon*, or he might think me designing. Now he thinks me mercenary and the young people victims. That will stir up his interest. On the whole I have done well. I am sure I have."

Even Virginia could not see any flaw in the situation. This old man was ripe for the harvest. If West couldn't gather it, she, Virginia, could. And if West's prospects were to cloud suddenly, why, there were worse alternatives than a millionaire, however old. Perhaps on his unaccustomed holiday Zenas Riggs would be susceptible. Perhaps mama—Now that would be perfect! But it was too much to ask of even a well-managed fate; for then there would be no children, and the money would drop naturally into the hands of the wife's daughter and the old man's favorite, and Virginia would have a young husband added to the essential thing.

"I'd better write Mr. West." Virginia turned from the struggle of a toilet upon an unstable floor, and waited with her hair wound in her hand.

"I think so. From England. One steamer before ours." Mrs. Wakeman's dressing was accomplished. She lingered for discussion. "Don't call him Mr. West to Zenas Riggs. I've made you practically engaged."

"Well we are. That's no reason why I should use his first name to strangers. I hope you let him see distinctly that you never approved the match."

"I acted the cruel parent quite enough to suit the case. Maybe you'd better complain of my—"

"No. Be careful, Mother. You aren't to be trusted to let well enough alone. Leave it to me."

"If Landon West has fallen in love——"

"With another woman?" Virginia's laugh rang true. "You forget you said he wouldn't think it decent!— I believe I should rather enjoy——" Virginia held her brush suspended and smiled at her reflection—"getting him back."

"He's been gone a year. You never did really understand——" Mrs. Wakeman was not nasty in intention, merely uttering her anxiety.

"You make me hate you." Virginia in one of her chill rages spoke the words slowly, enunciating so that each syllable struck. Before her look of glassy hostility the mother shrank. "Suppose he should be mixed up with some frump of a creature out in the wilds—are you afraid? You keep out of the way when I'm talking to Mr. Riggs."

There was complete silence in the cabin as Virginia wielded the brush.

"I wish you weren't here. But I have to have a chaperon." The daughter shook out her locks, and replaced the brush by a silver and ivory comb.

"It wouldn't occur to you to miss me. I'm sure of that."

"Why should I miss you if things went better without you? Don't be a fool—I'm not proposing to have you marooned on a desert island." Again Virginia had been betrayed into plainer speaking than she liked. She was, in spite of her bravado, a little anxious. Cold impatience with a distaste

akin to nausea showed in her face as she turned to her mother. Mrs. Wakeman winced. She had seen that expression so many times on another face! And she had had only these two on whom to spend herself. A degraded spending it had been. If she could only get over expecting! Be like them! And she was not young; she wished Virginia were settled.

Without speaking she dressed and went on deck. Virginia sighed with relief, and gave her mind to the angle of her cap.

"I've a plan, Mrs. Wakeman." The holiday expression was rampant in Mr. Riggs's look. He walked with her to her chair. "You and Miss Virginia meet me in London next month, and go straight on to Talla Goya with me. Will you?"

"Mr. Riggs!" Mrs. Wakeman, brought quickly out of the bitterness of her absorption, exclaimed sharply. Her startled gaze at the suddenness of the very consummation for which she had worked, seemed hesitation.

"You must. Why not?" demanded Zenas Riggs.

Pleasure broke out visibly on Mrs. Wakeman's abruptly composed features. "How good of you!" she cried. "Of course we'll come."

But she remembered Virginia's command, and left her alone with the old man whenever opportunity appeared, and Virginia wasted no moment.

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNPLUCKED ORCHID AND AN ANGRY PRIEST

"If that mule Hinsdale would take enough interest in Talla Goya to prevent the worst of his asininites, West might be saved from him." Burden spoke growlingly in his lean throat.

"Quite so," responded the Major promptly. His distrust of Hinsdale had been so far muzzled by his loyalty to West, but he wagged his head with energy at Burden's confidence. "This Island was civilized when his ancestors were painting themselves with woad. And how—" The Major rattled the ice in his glass— "did he treat Bahada Pal'yama!"

"Who was he? Box coolie, builder caste, 'beggar man, thief'—you have so many sorts!"

"None of 'em, none of 'em." Major Ellinwood paused to watch the ice bobbing in the tea, as if there were entertainment in the sight. "He's a Singhalese from Colombo, great botanist and something of a historian, came up to give us advice on

the planting, and the questions Hinsdale asked him would have insulted a graven image. 'Asinine! He's vicious!'

Ponayeh, with another chattie of tea, came out to them smiling, but Burden shook his head, unseduced by the tinkle of the ice.

"My way's best," he insisted, tenderly unrolling the bottle that had lain in the hottest part of the path, while the wet cloth about it evaporated its moisture. "Natural coolness, you see, more refreshing than your ice. Better, too, for your entrails."

"Hm!" commented the Major, turning his glass thoughtfully against the light. "You want to live in an iceless land a few years, to know what ice means. If West had slipped up on this ice machine of his, I should have wept."

"'Slipped up'! West!—See here, Major, I hope you don't think Hinsdale can seriously hamper—" Burden looked cautiously around. "Ponayeh gone? That's the most beautiful frame the Lord ever created. Never saw such grace in anything human."

"Plain you've never been in love." The Major chuckled, holding the glass so the ice bobbed as near his lips as the rim allowed. For an instant an expression that was the negation of all expression arrested the animation of Burden's look.

"What can we do?" Marjorie had joined them

under the trees in time to hear the mention of Hinsdale. She had seen, too, the sudden going out of the light in Burden's eyes.

"Can't you do something? You've got more subtlety than a man.—Eve and the Serpent, you know." The Major took one of her hands and flapped it thoughtfully upon his palm.

"Eve!" Marjorie smiled, recovering the punished hand. "Eve was stupid."

"She beguiled Adam." Burden lifted a quizzical glance.

"It wasn't hard. If you're under any delusion about Adam's cleverness, you ought to visit his Footprint. No man with a foot two yards long could be clever. After he was shut out of Eden, he used to climb up to Adam's Peak and look in."

"Peek in," corrected Burden.

The Major was serious. "You'd find it quite worth your while," he said. "You'd be following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great and the greatest of the Buddhas and—"

"It must have been a heavy effort for a man who put in most of his life sitting! How high is the Peak?"

"Seven thous—" began the Major.

"More information!" moaned Marjorie. "And Mr. Burden won't dare to go to s——"

"Peace, woman!" Her father lifted a warning finger. "We want a bit of rational conversation."

Burden knew that the mention of Adam's Peak was only one of the girl's ways of giving the Major an opportunity he loved. But while the Major talked, and Burden took notes, Marjorie was not thinking of the Footprint. Something must be done with Hinsdale. Could she do it?

All day she thought, and all day she wished she might tell her plan to West, but she feared West would not understand her criticism of his subordinate. To tell him what would make him understand, would be to play the part of a tattler.

"Miss Ellinwood wants me to go to the village with her," Hinsdale announced the next morning. "I suppose the dadops will have to wait."

"The Major can take Wanayama and get them into the ground." West was surprised but he made no comment. It was not an easy morning to be without his assistant, and it was not like Marjorie to have arranged for this defection with no word to him.

Burden and his sketching kit made part of the expedition. Marjorie and Hinsdale left him under a lettuce tree that wavered like a yellow fire against the bright blue of the sky. Beyond him a ping chattie set in the crotch of a dry stump, shaded by a palm leaf thatch, showed red brown against the forest green. A bird, burnished like a green-blue jewel, perched on the edge of the jar and drank, while a native mother poured a thin stream from

the clean scoop into the mouth of the brown baby astride her hip. Between jacket and skirt-like comb-boy, her waist revealed a space of brown skin, and her bare feet made small neat footprints in the dust.

"Don't," cried Marjorie in distress.

Hinsdale, rinsing the scoop the mother had laid down, had filled it and brought it near his lips.

"Don't touch the bowl of it; it defiles it."

"That beats the Dutch! If I can drink after a lot of dirty——"

"But they're not at all dirty about drinking. They pour the water from above."

"You're too amiable, Miss Ellinwood." Hinsdale grinned indulgently and raised the gourd again. A little way off the woman was watching anxiously.

"I drink to our better friendship." Hinsdale's words were formal, but an informal flush overspread his face.

"Please," she said. "You won't do that."

"Drink to our friendship?"

"Offend the village."

Hinsdale poured the water on the ground. "All right; if you ask it," he said sentimentally.

"Thank you." Marjorie held out her hand. He took it with a soft pressure that repeated his glance. She withdrew her hand quickly, but Hinsdale felt only more sure that he had produced an effect. It was delightful to "get a raise" out of this girl, he told himself. Even her worry about the gourd had

pleased him. Perhaps her friendliness with West was only the cover for a hidden yearning toward himself. He had been too easily cast down. He must make up for lost time with her.

"You'll get ill if you go about drinking unboiled water in this island," Marjorie began as they moved on. "There are some customs one has to observe in a strange place!"

"I don't know but I'd better try a little malarial water if I can get you so sympathetic as that." Hinsdale turned on her again his sultry glance.

"I want *you* to have the sympathetic eye!" Already Marjorie had a sense of failure in her missionary task. Something like the smooth slipperiness of oilstone seemed to interpose between her and the man's understanding. "These village people are mine, you know. They've let me teach the children. And their lives are such slavery!"

"They look fat and contented."

"They're slaves. Buddhism is like the torture small children inflict on themselves. I remember when I was a wee thing getting it into my head that saliva was poison; I suffered misery for days because I daren't swallow. There were cracks in the flagging in front of my playground I never passed without putting a foot on each, and if I forgot I ran back and touched them twice to make up. Modern Buddhism is like that, only a thousand times worse."

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"I never had any of those baby fits over nothing. I was a well child, good and sound. Parents ought not to palter with that kind of truck. Laugh 'em out of it or lick 'em out of it, I say, and just the same with these black fellows. A good taste of the bamboo now and then would do a lot to cure 'em of their kid tricks."

"You're quite wrong. Ridicule is death to a child unless he's in the laugh. And violence never trained a foolish imagination—just turns it to deceit. It was that very thing——"

"I suppose I'm not much of a sympathizer. Sloppiness gives me the fantods."

"What you call sloppiness is often the best sense. You wouldn't call the big financiers sloppy, and they have it. How do they know, even swindlers, what schemes will take other men's fancy? Because they can get inside the other men's minds."

"O you needn't defend anything; I didn't mean any reflection on you. A delicate girl, you know, has to have these notions. Needs the steadyin influence of a real man to keep the balance." Hinsdale smiled at her reassuringly.

"I wasn't thinking of ourselves, but of Talla Goya. To make the thing succeed, the managers must understand their people. A little carelessness makes them restless. If they should get the idea the place was haunted by the river demons, for instance, they wouldn't stay, and others wouldn't

come. Some very little thing could hurt us there. Suppose they found the gifts in one of their little praying places knocked about—then the next twinge of fever would mean the river devils were at them. I was hoping that if you and I talked the thing over——”

“I’m ready to talk over anything—with you,” languished Hinsdale, drawing a little closer. “Couldn’t we find something more interesting than Talla Goya?”

“There isn’t anything more interesting, to me.” Marjorie made an excuse of a pink-stemmed orchid to leave him. He had paid no slightest heed to her words. She felt sure now that her attempt was doing more harm than good, perhaps suggesting new mischief to him.

“The sun will be worse when we get out of the woods. Shan’t we go back?” she asked abruptly.

“O no. No. You don’t think I’d turn back when I could stay with you longer by walking on?”

Marjorie concealed a shiver as she raised her hand to the orchid. She moved away without picking it. Why tear off the poor thing to wither in the heat? Hinsdale would care nothing for its purple-lined leaves and the lilac veins in the white blossom!

She dreaded the village. The man was impervious to suggestion, panoplied with conceit. But before they were actually in the street, she had pulled

herself to a higher notch of courage, expending herself in useless efforts to let the charm of the scene shine through her own mind into Hinsdale's.

Before the thatched huts on either side of the grassy road ran little streams of a mountain brook diverted from its natural course to make twin rivulets. Across them rustic bridges led to open doors. On the platform before each house, smeared like the walls inside, with a firm cement of dried cow's dung—discourager of vermin—lounged the Singhalese men, drying their long hair after its morning wash in the brook. Some had reached the stage of anointing, preparatory to making the coil held in place by the tortoise-shell comb; and Hinsdale's only appreciation for a scene full of tropical glow was, "Rancid oil! How can you stand it!" He spoke carefully, but his look was loud and easily interpreted.

Burden had not caught up. Hinsdale paused at each of the tiny shops where bits of dried fish, yams and mangoes and hard cakes, were laid on plaintain leaves, and huge banana bunches dangled from low eaves, but he bought nothing. At the jewels of Alphonso Perira he showed a gleam of interest. Alphonso was a pure-blooded Singhalese, his name the dying echo of Portuguese conquest. His dark eyes, pleasing even in a land where all eyes are brown and all hair black, followed their gaze as they hung over his cloth tray where sardonyx and

sandalon, hyacinth and ruby, sapphire and moonstone, lay outspread in the veiled dazzle of their native cutting.

"Frauds," said Hinsdale, "most of 'em. They told me at Colombo they were made in Italian glass works."

Alphonso Perira drew back, subtle offense in the gesture with which he folded his arms.

"Those are jewels they sell the 'fool steamboat gentlemen.'" Marjorie spoke quickly. "Up here we have only real gems. There's no better judge than Alphonso Perira."

Alphonso relaxed his impassive waiting, but he ignored Hinsdale with the polite avoidance of glance that Hinsdale called *airs*.

Marjorie had hoped to have Burden's help in subduing the tongue of her companion before they entered the temple, but the yellow lettuce tree had evidently proved too alluring.

Hinsdale wanted to see the temple. He wanted anything that would prolong the morning. If the scene had no charm for his self-centered soul, the passionate life of the natural world, the odors of rank vegetation drunk with the sun, set the pulses of his big body beating with unaccustomed force. The things that produce a spiritual intoxication in many men, left Hinsdale cold and often scornful; but to a physical stimulus he responded. His square blond face, his curly hair thick on his Apollo

head, his massive, strongly wrought figure, seemed less statue-like than formerly. His immense sea-blue eyes, that had gazed at the world hitherto without either the interest or the innocence of a baby's, had now a look greedy and demanding. This look that disregarded the village, held almost fiercely to Marjorie, dwelling on the lines of her slender body, on the smooth curve of her chin, on the lift of her upper lip where the whiteness took a tiny triangle from the red and the soft fullness of the under lip came up to meet its mate.

"Don't forget that the priest speaks English," Marjorie warned him as he followed her, forgetting to return the grave greeting of the yellow-clad guardian of the shrine.

In our day, long trains no longer come winding across the foothills to acquire merit worshiping the Buddha of Kalu-velli, but solitary pilgrims still wander down from the north along the overgrown highway to pay impartial homage to Vishnu and Guatama.

The inside of the shrine was dim, heavy with the sweetness of temple flowers. Poetry Hinsdale knew only as a smattering of Longfellow forced on him by the public schools of his native land. The shimmering of the priest's robe, the color and the smells of the Orient, the newness and strangeness of his surroundings, for the first time in a year of the East, penetrated him with a sense of something

uncomprehended, as if he and Marjorie were shut into a just-discovered world, deliciously alone.

Before the shrine of Buddha, where the god, hung with wilting marigold wreaths, and dripping with fresh anointings of butter, glittered darkly under the cocoanut lamps, he was silent, but as they turned away, his eyes, that had grown used to the dark, fell on a group of Tamils worshiping the images of Siva and Vishnu, the sacred cow-dung ash smeared in blotched lines on their foreheads.

"Greasy niggers, the whole lot," whispered Hinsdale in the tone that carries farther than louder speech.

The priest had been tending one of the cocoanut lamps; he was coming toward them and he heard. Marjorie drew back, white anger in the flash of her look.

At the door they met Burden. Marjorie exchanged with him a glance where distress answered inquiry.

Sopra-Paliyama, the round-faced priest, lifted the lids he had suddenly lowered, and there was fire still left in their softness. A cobra slipping leisurely along the path to the *pansala* escaped Hinsdale's notice. Marjorie was glad. The cobra was the temple pet.

"What's old Burden doing round that stink-hole? He's been there fifty times already." Marjorie

wondered at the unusual animation in her companion's voice.

"Trying to undo some of the harm you've done," she answered. "You have made an enemy for Talla Goya, a powerful enemy."

"O Talla Goya's all right. We've got the new bungalow and the power-house and the lake and fifteen miles of good road and a cocoa grove cleared out and a few dozen nice little agricultural enterprises under way—I guess we can manage without Sambo."

In the effort to control an anger that was in danger of controlling her, Marjorie was silent.

"Don't worry. A woman's nervous you know." Hinsdale was still joyously excited. "What you want to do is to let 'em see you despise their trumpery gods. Let 'em be as mad as they like and get over it."

"It was not the gods, it was the people, you insulted." Marjorie looked amazed into the face of this besotted blindness, and could not comprehend it. "We shall all be sorry."

When the men dropped for the midday rest, chewing their betel and spitting floods of blood-red juice, West tried to hold himself to the calculations he was making on a bit of dried palm, but a point of pain pricking always at the same place brought him

again to his feet. *Was Marjorie Ellinwood attracted by John Hinsdale?*

On the slope he was mounting, an anxious face confronted his own.

"What's wrong, Supiah?" It was the Tamil overseer.

"The small miscreant, my jackal of a little son—"

"He sick?"

"He is. I would send for the devil doctor. May Narzan go?"

They spoke in Tamil, West feeling his way, the other voluble.

"Take him to the hills. Cooler air. The shame of his ancestors shall plague you long."

The *appu* beamed. The worse the names the child was called, the more chance he had of escaping the devils that were after him.

"My work?"

"We'll manage. But for Heaven's sake hurry back." West had lapsed into English but Supiah understood.

"I go. Good devil doctor at Sala-galle. Also wealthy air—" The *appu* was politely struggling to respond in West's language. He paused and cast about him for words. Then in a sudden burst—"May the gods give you tit for tat," he cried triumphant.

"Take the railroad, Supiah." West's look

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responded amiably to the gratitude. He liked the chubby infant, dressed only in silver chains and devil charms, that toddled about the *appu's* door. He hoped the child would get well, and he hoped Supiah would be back soon! The work was already pressing hard without an additional burden.

"If she cares for Hinsdale—" his thoughts went on under the surface of all other concerns. The point was striking deeper. As he marched to the rasping tune of the cicadas, he fought hard to fix his mind upon the new sill he was adding to the dam. What did it matter whether he had a foot more or less of water in his lake if Marjorie, his chum—It was of no use to fight. The pain was there. But he stuck doggedly to his work.

CHAPTER XV

THE HAMMER OF THE GODS

"SIRS coming see quick—Mr. Raend—transmigrations reever!"

Goddewana, incoherent, was on the threshold. The fatalism of the East was lost in excitement.

"What is it?" West's words came with a snap. He tumbled the chessmen between him and the Major into a heap on the bungalow floor.

"Strange men making transmigrating reever—higher side falls." Goddewana's hair, his clothes, streamed with rain. Bits of vine and broken twigs clung to him.

"They're turning the river. Come on." West was at the door.

"*Bohoma hari. Api yanawá!*" Goddewana's eyes shone satisfied. He was getting his breath.

"*Kiyak?*" West stopped to dart the question at him.

"Ten." Goddewana lifted both hands with fingers spread. "Men from village. Reever being

moved, what is it but?—To me running getting here sooner I can't."

" You did well, Goddewana. See if you can find Mr. Burden's green case that snaps together. *Wigahata palayan!*"

" The *widerale* being with them," shouted Goddewana as he fled toward the camp.

" The devil doctor," echoed the Major. He was tugging at a rain cap wedged in his pocket.

" You mustn't leave Miss Ellinwood." West interfered quickly.

" Certainly he must." Marjorie too had risen. Her answer came so suddenly as to sound like anger. " I'm perfectly safe."

" She is, West. They won't touch Marjorie. And you can't take our men out against the devil doctor. We'll be three to ten as it is."

Marjorie, the clear white of her face gone suddenly bloodless, was busy about the Major.

Hinsdale pulled himself out of his chair and towered in the low room. " Those mild little chaps! Call it three to three," he scoffed.

" You don't know them," answered the girl. " You've never seen them roused. With the devil doctor behind them they'll fear nothing. Don't hurt *him*. It would make dreadful trouble." She appealed to the Major.

West had gone. Major Ellinwood opened the door into his bedroom, hunting for a shod stick with

which to climb. Hinsdale from outside called to Marjorie. She followed him into the rain-wet veranda, her eyes searching the way to the camp. West had disappeared.

"We may some of us get hurt up there. Won't you let me—say good night a better way?" Hinsdale blocked retreat and leaned to her from beside the door.

The Major was fuming about inside, knocking down a dozen things to find one.

"I must help my father." Marjorie was thinking of action, not sentiment. It seemed a curious time to be considering good nights. The Talipal was in danger. She knew the place. West had strengthened it before the rains began. There had been the merest suspicion of peril that the flood would break through a sandstone crumble of rock and earth above the Kakarella gorge.

"Good-night and good luck!" she added, seeing that Hinsdale still waited.

"Is that all?" he answered in a voice mellowed and hopeful. "That isn't all?" He was groping for her, but her "Coming, Dad," sounded already from inside the house. The thrill of anger in it pleased him. Of course her heart had failed her at the final pinch. Another time he would succeed. Wasn't the kingdom of Heaven taken by storm? She must have a weakness for the man she had carried off for a long morning's talk! Talla Goya!

That was only an excuse. And she had even been angry with him as if she had some right to dictate!

As they started, Hinsdale sang to himself, filled with unctuous recollection.

"I'll take that, Goddewana." West stripped a sharp little wood ax out of the green case.

"All right."

"And you stay with Miss Ellinwood."

"All right," said the brown man again. There was disappointment as well as obedience in the last *all right*.

"How Burden will groan at missing a fight!" West laughed below his breath, as they climbed fast on the traveled path of the first ascent.

The lake was still full, the water flooding down the bed of the Talipal beyond. The sound was sweet to West's ears. Hinsdale's manner, jubilant, insolently detached as if his thoughts reviewed some pleasant episode, was less pleasing! It gave a sharper fighting edge to West's voice.

"Think I'll make an extra circuit underground around the power-house and run it up to the new bungalow. We can lock the switchboard and hope it'll never be needed."

"Pshaw! That's too childish," commented Hinsdale. "They wouldn't attack the power-house. You're so tickled with your little plant you want to wire the earth."

"Wonder what set the *widerale* against us?"
The Major panted close after West.

"He and the priest there didn't like my callin'
'em greasy niggers, I guess," chuckled Hinsdale.

West did not answer. The words on his lips would have found utterance fast enough if the man had not been his rival. He would not seem to show jealousy by vituperation.

"I ought to have sent him off before he got us into this," he was saying to himself. "Raend wouldn't have had a handle to get hold of if the whole village hadn't been set on edge."

"How Raend," he thought aloud, "ever persuaded the *widerale* to touch the river in spite of the river demons—"

"Told 'em to give it its freedom, so it wouldn't have to do your work." The Major was well up with the other two, climbing ardently. "Plenty of reasons a sneaking bounder like that can get up if he wants to turn a mean trick."

"That's all Goddewana's nonsense," Hinsdale put in gruffly. "I don't believe Raend had anything to do with it."

"*Ohuta peréda kiwwa.*" The voice came quietly out of the dark. "Mr. Hinsdale say telling Mr. West at once he is."

"What's that gibberish?" Hinsdale stopped an instant.

"Goddewana says he told you day before yester-

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day there was some river plot afoot, and you promised to warn me instantly. That was before you went to Kabimara, Goddewana?"

"You are saying."

Goddewana slipped closer. "Better no talkings. Sh!"

"How came you here?" West did not pause. His question struck sternly in the lowest voice that could be heard.

"Miss Ellinwood sending me. Saying she being safest I coming care her father on mountain. I bringing charm," he added, "scare devil doctor. She giving me."

To the last words no one paid any attention. West was considering the obstinate disloyalty of Hinsdale's behavior; his contempt for Goddewana's warning might have cost them the Talipal. There should be a plain understanding with Hinsdale, rival or no rival.

Leading the way, West constantly quickened the pace. Even on this steep path beset with sudden slides and pitfalls, they kept the accelerating speed to which they had settled. They were half-way between the lake and the falls when Goddewana touched West and they came to a stop. Through the fog sounds came distinctly.

"They're at work. Hurry." West raged. But it was a curbed rage. He had no intention of ruin-

ing Talla Goya for revenge on a handful of terrified natives.

"Don't show anything like a pistol," he commanded sharply. "We're not going to get Talla Goya into bad odor with the government."

Goddewana in the rear twisted his ankle painfully, and crouched to manipulate it till it would bear his weight. No one noticed his absence.

Crawling and clinging on the abrupt ascent the others mounted. West could hear his water-soaked clothing rip in the teeth of the thorns.

Then the comforting roar of the falls lessened, falling away into the depths of the gorge, dwindled more,—ceased.

The Major groaned aloud. "They've done it," he cried. "They've turned the river."

The silence of the dripping woods came like a sick blow; in its dumb distress the distant cry of the jackals and the whirr of the bats sounded ominous and shrill.

To West the climb so far had seemed a nightmare of slow caution. He had held himself to a pace suited to his companions only by hard exercise of will. Now he went as he would. If Raend's people had merely built a dam, Talla Goya might still be in time to save the river from breaking through the Kakarella side.

The thought came to Hinsdale at the same moment, dulling a half guilty sense of pleasure in

West's discomfiture. For an instant it slackened his speed. Then he remembered Marjorie. If he could have Marjorie, West could have Talla Goya. For West there wouldn't be much happiness in success with Marjorie in love with another man!

They were nearing the spot. Some current of air carried off the noise of their approach.

"There. That's enough. We've got it." Raend's voice came down to them. "Your river devils will be at peace. Get back there before the crash comes. It may be bigger than I'm planning for." A scramble above matched the final effort of the climbers. West, ahead, pulled and hurled himself upward on the steep rocks. Compared with the impetus of his advance Hinsdale's great strength was lumbering and slow. The Major was making a valiant fight for breath, warning Hinsdale in hissing whispers—"Feel the way with your stick. Not your hand first. Careful now.—More to the right.—A better hold there."

West hung on the verge of the cliff they had mounted, and with a wrench that stretched his muscles in their sockets, jerked his body high enough so he could grasp an aloe stem that held to the grassy edge. Then, one arm on the rock, he flung himself over, and reached down to give a hand to his companions. They were too far below.

Without waiting, he leaped to his feet and moved forward. His eyes, grown used to the dark, saw

instantly the flood rising from Raend's dam. A dying glimmer of drowned torches, washed backward from the barrier, revealed the width of the hindered stream. This main source of the Talipal was a mountain brook that dwindled in the dry months to a rill. In the rains it was itself a river.

Would Raend's dam hold against the lake it made? Close to the barrier West waded out, and by the vanishing torch gleams studied the obstruction. A splendid tree, whose shade he had already marked as the view-point of future Talla Goya walks, had been felled across the top of the fall, its trunk wedged against jutting rocks, its branches braced irrevocably in the tangle of the opposite side. A boulder pried into midstream had widened the flow and given the dam-builders a better chance in a shallower basin. There, against the trunk, they had massed stones and wattlings of stout boughs welded with a bank of clay brought in baskets from the old gem pits above. The work must have taken the entire day. While Hinsdale, fatuous in his conceit, had suppressed Goddewana's warning!

How long before the water would reach the weak spot on the Kakarella side and send the Tali-pal to join the Kakamua-Oya? He turned the glint of his pocket lamp across the flood, revealing himself to the watchers on the other bank. Dim figures stole away from the gleam to the edge of the wood beyond the top of the fallen tree.

West's light was not seeking the fleeing figures; it went straight to the weak spot of the crumbling sandstone that thrust a wedge to the surface through the hard mass of basal rock that made the height.

"Here—for your life!" he yelled. "Major! Hinsdale!"

The other two, mounting by a detour, saw him swimming half-way across the seething lake.

"Get—over—here!" he spluttered back at them, choked by the refuse the baffled river flung at him. Even above the fall the slope was at a terrific angle. The water plunged on it like a frightened colt. It met the barrier frothing and furious, reared back on itself in a frantic whirl of waves that made crossing like the swimming of a cauldron.

The flood was excavating fast on the side toward Kakarella. The weak place was in a scoop of the bed dug deep by the scour of the rains. The margin had been broken and hammered to fragments by the dam-builders; through and over them the first of the ripple already ran, trickling down the wrong side of the mountain. Another ten minutes, another minute, might see the giving way of some vital wedge of rock that would hurl the whole in a mad gallop and plunge after the trickle. The path worn by this pent-up pond would quickly be a highway.

To reclaim the river would mean delay to Talla Goya, and so difficult and dangerous a bit of en-

gineering as might cost the lives of his inexperienced men. West knew the wearying litigation that might block his way in a land where witnesses may be bought for a penny. Long before the district court could come upon the truth, the old gorge would be so deep in jungle that no man could say a stream had flowed there.

Plainly the men in the wood believed their work accomplished. West could guess the fat satisfaction of Raend's face at the sight of the futile efforts of the Talla Goyans.

Before the others had reached him West had stopped the trickle, but the water gained. Hinsdale was sucking his breath in heavy jerks. He and the Major had forded above.

"Don't fuss at it that way. Give it something to fill up," he shouted and wrenched a stone an ox might hardly have dragged from its bed and planted it with a crash upon their hasty construction. The bank gave outward and the leaking began again toward Kakarella.

"Seas of Prakama! You've done it! You've sent her over," fumed the Major.

"Where are the torches?" West's voice was low.

"Wet. Threw 'em away." Hinsdale was feeling about for stones and mud.

"You——" began the Major. West broke in

on the malediction, speaking again so low that the watchers could hear nothing.

"We can't beat out all these tons of water. We must let them out on our side. You two keep up the fight. Hold back here as long as you can."

Before either could answer he was swimming again, this time drifting quickly toward the big boulder and the tree that was the backbone of the dam. The wood ax was fast to his belt.

When his first blows resounded on the wood, the other two had almost recovered lost ground.

"I suppose we could turn her back even if we let her go." Hinsdale, battening and scraping, came to a halt. "Strikes me we're making a tempest in a teapot."

"Your forefathers didn't think so when they dug dirt on Bunker Hill," growled the Major. "You going to lie down, with the devil doctor watching?"

He dared not say *Raend*. But that the "niggers" should triumph would be a dose for Hinsdale's contempt.

"By Jinks—now!" Hinsdale answered as if the thought were new and bent to his work.

West's strokes were coming sharp and sturdy on the log. All at once they stopped and there was a tense wavering of dark shadows where the fallen tree marked the sheer drop of the fall. Some one had forded the stream above, and crept down to grapple West from behind.

"Hold on—I'm coming!" yelled the Major.

The shadows strove, silent, and still wavered on the edge of the precipice. The new-made lake seemed to stretch on and on before the Major swimming with all that was left of his exhausted strength.

"Hold on—West!" He lifted the hoarse cry every time the wash of mud and sticks against his lips left him free to shout. "West—West—I'm coming!"

Hinsdale could see that West had managed to writhe about and face his assailant. It would be over before the Major could get there, before anyone—

Arm gripped on arm, the black figures contending for the hatchet swayed outward—"God!" shrieked the Major half-way across the cold welter of the flood.

Out of the dark there streamed upon the log a blinding gleam of light. The taller of the swaying men, shifting his foothold upon the rough bark in the very second of recovered sight hurled his weight backward from the plunge. His stocky companion fell with him. The water covered them.

A yell louder than the Major's, the scream of fear from a dozen throats, had greeted the coming of the light. Moans and the sound of broken under-growth, where frightened men groveled, followed the cries. A dark figure scrambled upon the log

from the whirl of impeded waves, and ran on all fours in a kind of insane terror to tumble crashing among the branches of the great tree.

"All—right—Major!" West came up, the hatchet still in his right hand, from the deepest pool beside the boulder. "Glad—I—saved the ax."

"Glad you had sense enough to take your shoes off." The Major grunted cheerfully, his blinking gaze on West. West's eyes were on the shore by which they had ascended. He was recalling Goddewana's words. "*Charm—scare devil doctor. She giving me.*" Under his breath he chuckled.

"Guess that spikes Raend's gun for to-night," he muttered. For the light beamed from Buddha's eyes and from the eyes of a cobra beneath whose spread hood the miniature god sat enthroned. The snake's eyes were emerald, and twinkled wickedly upon the damned Talipal. The god's were crystal and gave a glow clear enough to show across the lake. West had himself arranged the battery that set the lamps glowing within the hollow image. It would burn for hours. He fell to again upon his log.

"The gods are fighting for us," he called to Hinsdale. The thing must have been a heavy load for Goddewana. But it insured a bloodless victory. Would it be also waterless?

Hinsdale, absorbed in the grim moment, had forgotten the crumbling sandstone on which he stood.

The water was dripping again through the mass that he and the Major had piled. The clay pits were above and on the wrong side. Spades and baskets had both been carried off by the dam-builders, and hidden in the wood. The Talla Goyans must make use of what they had.

The Major's teeth were chattering. Hinsdale offered his flask as they set to work.

"Thanks," shouted the Major, and renewed the struggle, waving away the offered drink.

Hinsdale swallowed thirstily before he again plugged back the seeping waves. The moment before had left him sick with the receding of strange emotions. He was chiefly conscious that he was glad West was alive.

"Stinking little wretches," the Major heard him say as he blocked a crevice with his great hand till his companion could ram home a pulp of rotting leaves. The blows resounded steadily on the log.

"It will take a year to go through that thing," grumbled the Major.

"Change—with—me," shouted Hinsdale.

West heard the note of battle in the big voice. The instinct that had never failed him except with this one man assured him Hinsdale was with him. He yielded instantly.

The steel was sharp. Hinsdale's strength drove the blade deep. West working swiftly beside the Major was heartened by the strokes. Twice, brown

figures peering from the wood had been revealed by the light, that now and then left the log and swept along the endangered shore, pointing out the weak spots where the crawling fingers of the lake could get a hold.

"No god—a toy. A lamp for a bungalow." There was a sound of suppressed debate in the shadow of the trees. The margin of the stream where West and the Major fought the flood was an open *patena* where solitary aloes alone broke the rank thicket of lemon grass, but beside the tumbled top of the great tree the forest began.

"Just a lamp—nothing but a—"

"—angered that we touch the river—He helping now the river devils—" The *widerale* was speaking.

It seemed a tame enough ending for a half begun fight. West was conscious of a little shame at the ruse that sheltered them from interference. Then a pistol shot aimed at the shining eyes went wide.

West expected to see the light vanish. Fit punishment for his ingratitude! Had the brute killed Goddewana? Goddewana must be holding the thing in place shielded by the bush from which it shone. West's gorge rose, and he would have deserted his post to rush for the thicket, but the light remained steady.

"Defiler of shrines!" hissed from the shadow. A groan of protest, this time a white man's, showed

West that he was not needed; the devil doctor and his men were disarming Raend. There would be no more firing. The real enemy was the flood.

"Sacrilege!" Voices still issued from the dark beyond them.

Why had Raend gone to this malicious trouble? Why was he determined to delay and hurt Talla Goya? He wasn't the man to waste good time on moneyless revenge. Did he want to discredit West and get another man into the berth at Talla Goya? Raend had influential acquaintances among his directors. He might even reach Zenas Riggs. It was conceivable. West came near the truth, but what he did not guess was that Raend had selected his successor, and that the successor was Hinsdale.

"How—are—you—coming—on?" The water roared in their ears as the lake rose. Hinsdale's answer was dulled by the sound.

"Two-thirds through. Can you hold out?"

"Not much longer. Shall we change?"

"I'm cutting this twice as fast as you could." Hinsdale drove the blade once more against the firm grain of the green wood.

An hour and still the log was braced against the weight of the lake! Goddewana, emerging at the disappearance of the brown men, worked with West and the Major at the crumbling sandstone.

"Done all—I—dare. Water 'll break it through

now." Hinsdale had walked the trunk to the branches and crashed into them coming out by the holders of the Kakarella side. For all their nightmare struggles, the water at a hundred places was finding its way through and over.

"My God, the thing's going! We can't wait." West seized the hatchet Hinsdale had thrown down. The stream had not ceased rioting down from the deeps of the forest above to pound at the clay and log defense and come battering back, pressing outward upon the sandstone margin. Here the depth was greatest, and here the impact of the recoil came strongest.

"Look out—She's going!" The Major leaped, giving over his futile task. Hinsdale followed, plunging beyond the danger strip as the water curling over licked his heels. Goddewana, before them, was crying out to West.

Neither of the two had realized West's intention. Hinsdale had underrated the stoutness of the wood. On the log blows sounded again, every stroke splashing the risen water.

"Come back, you—" The Major yelled oaths and entreaties.

West struck again. The water curled higher over the sandstone, running in a vigorous little rill into the hollow of the Kakarella slope.

Deep beneath the water some wedge of rock had slipped. The middle wall gave way altogether.

With a rush, the flood beat over the Kakarella barrier to roar downward enraged at its long restraint.

But West had struck again. The big log cracked, gave outward, and, as West leaped to the boulder, broke and tore with it the wattlings of bough and clay. The roar from the Kakarella side ascended first, but the thunder of the Talipal, dropping the sheer plunge of its mighty precipice, drowned and lost it. The boulder rocked, moved, jarred upon the stones beneath, and held. West, clambering to the top, swung dizzily in the air. The rope of jungle vine flung out by Goddewana from above brushed the boulder's upper side. Still the rock remained poised. Though it was grinding farther and farther upon the margin, the contending currents forced around to seek their bed pressed too evenly to let it go.

The lake sank inch by inch, foot by foot. The rock swung less and less, but moved grating upon the verge. Trembling, it waited the instant of the flood's release. West dropped into the middle of the stream. He had grasped the liana. Goddewana tugged at the vine stem, and braced the swimmer's strokes against the racing water. The rock tottered; plunged. But the stream had dwindled. Even against its furious current the strength of the liana prevailed.

Over West, sitting shamefaced and dripping in

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the mud of the margin, the Major swore and God-dewana wept.

"It was a dam fool thing to do," growled Hinsdale. "I must say it didn't seem worth risking your life for."

"I know it. I was an idiot. Don't rub it in," answered West shivering. The rain had stopped, but the wind came damp out of the woods.

The god was left shining into the night to keep guard over the recovered stream. The Kakarella was again dry, but the Hammer of the Gods pounded the fragments of the fallen boulder and the Talipal went shouting down the gorge. Marjorie, listening through the interminable hours, heard at last its returning roar.

It shook the staunch grip of her waiting courage. When three figures came slowly into the dim circle of the light and she saw that one leaned upon the others she cried out. Only the Major caught the look of relief in her face when she discovered it was Hinsdale.

Hinsdale had heard the cry and was glad that he had not heeded the Major's warning in the treacherous descent where an incautious foot was bound to skid on wet leaves and plunge through newly washed-out holes in the damp mould. He was disappointed that the hurt, painful in the descent, proved to be the merest strain.

West, too, had heard the cry. It did not occur to

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him that any one, however beset by mist or thrilled by fear, could mistake Hinsdale for the Major or himself, even in the dark. The roar of the Talipal ceased to comfort him.

CHAPTER XVI

MAJORIE KNOWS AND WEST WONDERS

HINSDALE's self-esteem had been fed by the walk to the village, and more than all by Marjorie's cry of anxiety on their return from the river. He dealt curtly with Raend who hunted him out when he was alone. Raend had supposed that his presence at the river was unknown to Talla Goya defenders. He still hoped to use the Talla Goya water-power, not to furnish actual light and lifting for the neighborhood, but to secure more contributions from the willing who exchange money for shares. The present directors and stockholders of the Lanka Electric were refusing to drop good guineas after bad till they were assured of tangible progress. Unless the assurance was forthcoming, Raend and Galbers would be forced to leave the Island, Jasons without their fleece. If this worst came to worst, it would be a certain solace in disaster to know that Talla Goya did not escape unpunished.

Raend went back to Colombo revolving many

things, and the resourceful Galbers sought out a Buddhist fanatic from Siam and poured into his ears in casual discourse hair-raising tales of the defilement of the faithful at forgotten Talla Goya. The Siamese pilgrim listened in silence, and set out for Kalu-velli and the shrine where Soypra-Pali-yama, priest of the yellow robe, had been called *greasy nigger* in the very presence of the gods.

In the borders of his former world, Hinsdale had been able to gauge the public attitude and make conscience of custom. Greater freedom seemed to him one of the perquisites of Talla Goya seclusion; the sense that his desires were some way hampered by West's differing standard doubled his resentment at things in general and West in particular. The desire to inflict pain on whatever balked him grew with each enforced restraint. West had long since discovered that he could not depend on Hinsdale for help in carrying out the restrictions that forbade native cruelty. But even Marjorie, whose distrust was keen, had seen no overt act to justify her doubt. Before his little public of the woods, Hinsdale still restrained himself.

The rains were nearly over. In the drench, West and Hinsdale had spent three days repairing wires torn down by the monkeys who swung from them in joyous groups just as they swung and climbed upon the liana stems.

"We shall have to try it, I suppose. A little of

the unusual will scare them," West answered Hinsdale's proposition to shock the playing bands where they most congregated about the plaintain grove.

Marjorie heard the proposition and the reply. "You'll be very careful?" she asked in some trouble. "Don't hurt them for what, after all, may do no good. Mr. Riggs's daily bread doesn't depend upon Talla Goya gardens!"

West caught her meaning. "Not at all. If it did, he wouldn't have anything tormented. He's the man who put his horses on the second floor of his country stable because the trees hid the outlook below, and a horse, he said, likes to see what's going on. He knows every hoot owl on his farm!"

Betty, Marjorie's waif wandroo, dropped by a frightened mother and brought in crying by Siwwá, had been given a companion. The village *gambarala* had found it asleep in the *dhabie's* basket and sent it with protestations. *Boots*, West called the newcomer. Boots and Betty listened to the discussion of the wire problem seated on a wooden dragon in the veranda corner. But they showed no interest, nibbling contentedly at their biscuit to fall asleep in one furry ball.

Betty, the abandoned baby, was less wistful since the infant companion of her exile had appeared at the bungalow. She was a gentle and affectionate little creature, sending her queer call of welcome far down the avenue when Marjorie returned, wait-

ing expectant by the door for the first word in the early morning. The time Marjorie had spent in tending the pining waif had increased the girl's tenderness for her.

In Marjorie, the Major's interest in men and birds and beasts had become a sensitiveness of comprehension, keener for her two years of jungle solitude. During that time the brown people and the wild creatures had been her salvation. Moving daily among the forest habitants, kindly, harmless, tending the sick and the trapped, she had established with the world outside the narrow human limit a reality of understanding. The tiny mouse deer that came daily to rest in the shadow of the bungalow had been driven to her first by thirst and she had given the parched creature water from the barrel drawn up from the village on two creaking wheels. None of the wild things were to her unclean. Even for the great scavengers of the slimy places she had no repulsion. In the fierce growth of the uncleared woods something must do their work. For the monkeys carrying on their cheerful life over her head she had a curious defensive feeling; how could they help it if they were too much like the men who despised them!

"I can't see," she said to West after Hinsdale had gone, "why men who know animals only as beasts with inherited instincts should be so angry

with people who know them better. They're always arguing with me."

"They're like the tone-deaf. They think because they hear no music there isn't any."

Marjorie in the path rubbed the silky dewlap of the white bullock that carried the wash to the *dhobie*, and looked back at West, speaking more intimately than ever in the year he had known her.

"Sometimes," she said, "I think I can't bear it, all the suffering of all the creatures."

"I suppose that is Christianity, bearing the sorrows of all the world as you do." West looked down at her from the veranda step, a seriousness in his eyes that seldom showed through what Burden called his effervescence.

"Some of it is weakness. What the bad old world needs is work, not worry!" She smiled, blotting the pain in her face with laughter. The pluck and poise, the fine strength of her, laid hold on West; homage and tenderness mastered him. But he did not speak. Hinsdale was calling. The old ache renewed itself. Did Marjorie care for Hinsdale?

As they strung the double wire, placing it where the second strand could be seized by an inquisitive paw that should complete the circuit, he mentally reduced the shock he meant to give, to the minimum that would startle the wood folks. To attend to it he went himself to the power-house and, turn-

ing on the current, left with Hinsdale and Goddewana stringent commands that the switch remain precisely where he had placed it.

Then he mounted to the lake, inspected the preparations for the adding of the sill, and shut off the water pouring in from the sluices. He was at the upper side of the great basin when a cry, faint from distance but sharp with distress, stopped his work. It was Marjorie's voice.

Before he could reach the level of the powerhouse in his downward plunge, Marjorie, her breath wrenching at her body, was standing on the threshold.

Hinsdale was giving orders to the boy who moved about wiping and oiling the machines.

"Shut off the current from the monkey wires. Quick," she screamed, but in a voice so concentrated that Hinsdale's denseness did not feel the horror behind the command.

"O the current's all right. Just giving the gentlemen a little lesson," grinned the man, meeting her gaze with admiring eyes. "Don't you worry."

"Which is the switch? Be quick. *Betty's dying*. Be quick I tell you."

Hinsdale liked to see her desperate for something he could give or withhold. He prolonged the situation still smiling.

"O it won't kill Betty,—do her good," he began. "You're too tender hearted——"

"Shut off that power. Now." The girl's fury and repulsion gave him a pleasant thrill of contemplation. "Which is it? I tell you, you're killing them. Can't you hear them scream?"

Hinsdale listened, and the cries that came on the wet air pleased him. The monkeys had cost him a good many hours of work. He'd seen to it they were paying—

"Here, what are you doing?" Hinsdale laid a hand on her arm. She was opening one after another every switch on the board. "You'll have us blown up."

"Mr. West—the wires—"

West, running, was at the entrance. At her word he sprang to the switchboard and shut off all the power from the new circuit.

"Who touched that switch?" He confronted Hinsdale in such rage as Marjorie had never known him to show through all the irritations of accident and trying work. There was something terrifying in the stabbing concentration of his blue eyes. "That circuit was not to be touched."

Hinsdale was still smiling. Marjorie leaned, sick with exhaustion, against the wall, fighting for breath to return.

"That'll do to say now!" Hinsdale's smile turned to a sneer as he looked from Marjorie to West. "Anything to save your credit with the girls."

"Go—to Betty," Marjorie spoke to West. Her breath was slow in coming. She had run with impossible speed.

West gave her one look, saw what was the thing to help, and was gone.

Trying to regain the use of her half paralyzed body, Marjorie drew herself toward the door.

"Better sit down." Hinsdale pulled forward a stool. "Silly girl!" He bent over her, unctuous, greedy, gloating.

"Don't come near me." The quickness with which she sprang to avoid him struck smarting on the nerve West's tone had left taut with rage.

The thought penetrated that he had lost ground with her just as he had begun to believe her his for the asking.

"It's the jollier and rake that wins out with the girls every time," he growled reproachfully. "What does a girl care for the solid fellows—what's she care for principle! You'd like me better if I could be all things to every one, like West."

"Mr. West would not sacrifice principle for any one." Marjorie was off her guard.

She drew farther away from Hinsdale. The smell of burnt hair was still in her nostrils, the man's grinning indifference before her eyes. She hardly heard his words even while she answered them. Her thoughts were with Betty.

"He wouldn't, eh? How about the girl he's en-

gaged to at home? While he's making love to you out here? And how about you, eating your heart out over a man like that, and bound to be left high and dry in the end?" Hinsdale's look gathered hate. "You're in love with Landon West. Anybody can see it."

She heard him now. Color burned up quickly into her white cheeks. Her eyes warmed to comprehension and greater repulsion.

"I believe you are mad. That is why you have tortured helpless things. You are not in your right mind." She looked at him questioning. He did not look sane. No man looks wholly sane when he is overcome by an insensate anger.

Hinsdale wanted to trample the slim creature who had stabbed his seldom-shaken conceit, whose mere presence was an aggravation and a torment to a soul hitherto satisfied with thoughts of itself. But to conquer he must get back what he had lost.

"I'm not mad, only jealous," he said, with a swift return to the unctuousness of his lovemaking.

"Come," he pleaded, honestly disturbed, while her look still studied him; as if she half believed the tropics had unsteadied his reason, "Come, don't be so angry."

His breath was all at once hot on her cheek. His arms, his whole reeking personality, his hot sweating body, were enclosing her, his full loose lips crushing upon her throat.

It was the final blow upon a sorely tried control, but in silence she fought herself from his grasp, not so much by the energy of frantic effort as by the naked disgust of her look.

"So that's it. I might have known it. It's plain enough." Hinsdale sneered into her retreating face. "You're too far gone with one man to want another—"

He left the sentence unfinished. Marjorie stood where she was, and for a long instant her contempt burned him. Then she too was gone.

Oaths, blasphemous, obscene, poured from the man's lips. He came to himself, the vileness of his own speech sobering him. A sense of the place to which the secret unbridling of his nature had led him made him pause. A year ago the images that now tormented his jealousy it would not have entered into his heart to conceive.

Marjorie, coming like a tense shadow out of the path, stood without speaking beside West as he bent over the lifeless Betty. He had given up the attempt to revive the tiny creature. Boots, moaning, had crept beside her, his burned paw fumbling her scorched fur, his little body trembling.

"Give them to me—He will grieve himself to death." She did not look at West, and West felt all in an instant a new distance opened between them. "It would have been better if it had been both."

"Do you want me— It would be kinder?" West waited.

"Yes," she said. "Come back by and by. I must care for him first."

But still she did not look at West.

Alone, she laid Betty on the soft kapok pillow where oftenest the waif had slept, and carried Boots indoors. But no tears moistened her eyes. They were dry under the dark lashes.

"Any one can see it." That was the truth. The one true word in many lies. Of course it was true. There was no day, no hour, when her thoughts did not hold to West. There was no life conceivable for her where his presence did not make the sun and moon and all the stars. With him gone, there would be no breath to breathe. Like a thing gasping in a vacuum, what could she do but die! Why had she never faced it? Never owned it? Hinsdale, dense, unsensitive to everything not big enough to be stumbled over, even he had seen it. It was true.

And West! Had he not been more careful than ever lately to say no words that seemed like love? Had there not been in his manner a sort of distance, a withdrawal?

In the sharpness of her trouble, Hinsdale's abhorred lovemaking was almost forgotten.

CHAPTER XVII

FOR THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN

"THE Honorable Park-Denby will reach Kandy on Monday. He is the guest of the Bannermans, and every moment of the old boy's visit seems to be engaged ahead. But come on. You may catch him.

"Nobody here dares introduce anybody to him who comes on business; he's up here to play. Orders strict. Keep off the grass. Come anyway. I'd like a look at you. This goes by rail to Kurunawalla and by the tapal coolie from there to Kaluvelli. Of course you're sending daily for your mail. Do get this by early Saturday and put in Sunday with me. Jim."

It was Monday. The letter had just appeared. Here at least was a definite task to break the hard monotony of a chumless Talla Goya. Marjorie was assuredly different. The comradeship was not the same. Would his absence be Hinsdale's opportunity? Had she forgotten her anger? Did she believe Hinsdale's lies about his chief's complicity?

Anxieties were many in these days. The Moor-men had been selling liquor on the sly to the Talla Goya men. An orgy of drunken gambling had ended in a murder, savage murder among the gentle Singhalese. The case had dragged Talla Goya into the courts and brought about a carnival of manufactured evidence where the truth was not. West, to save an innocent man, had been forced to take a hand. The thing had happened in one of his absences. He had had plain words with Hinsdale over the relaxing of vigilance that had permitted the arrack sale.

While he saw Marjorie obviously less the friend of West, Hinsdale's pleasure in the effect of his jeers kept him more willing to play his part as assistant with some dignity. He had held himself more closely to work since the plain talk. He was not prepared to leave Talla Goya, and he was conscious that the hour that found West convinced of bad faith would mean departure; West's loyalty to Riggs would end the opportunity to be near Marjorie. So Hinsdale set a guard upon himself. Sometimes the strength of the girl's repulse bit into him with rage, sometimes it crept upon him with longing violent as any anger. It seemed to him, as it does to every egotist, that his own feeling constituted a claim to which she was bound to yield.

The letter had come at night. Before dawn West was on his way to Kandy.

"Whatever happens, don't forget to have the lines ready for the Barua men. I promised them."

Hinsdale stirred impatiently in his bed. "O go to grass," he muttered. "I guess I can manage this mud hole a couple of days without orders."

The voice was amiable enough, but the lack of interest that had irritated him in Hinsdale from the beginning, struck into West a deeper sense of indignation.

It was with a sick distaste of life that he rode out of Talla Goya woods, and started on the winding road by which the pilgrims come to Kalu-velli. It made a shorter cut than the more traveled way, but it involved more discomfort. That the choosing of it might, by some, be imputed to him for righteousness would have been an idea highly amusing to West. He'd got to get hold of Park-Denby and quickly too.

Goddewana rode with him to the village.

"You getting fewer meats. More bones," he commented anxiously. "You best going Nuwara Eliya. Coolings—healthy," he advised.

"I've no time to go to Nuwara Eliya; you know you can't get on without me, eh, Goddewana!" West laughed, touched by the man's trouble over his thinness. "Look out the liquor doesn't get into

the lines, Goddewana. And bless your good old soul," he added as he rode away.

Goddewana talked sorrowfully with himself. "Too much yellow," he said.

West was not thinking of his complexion. Riding through the forest, his saddle-bags stuffed with the clothes of civilization, he contrasted bitterly the triumphant dreams of the past days with his present worry. The beauty of Talla Goya was emerging from the wilderness, and the bungalow and power-house stood monuments to almost super-human effort, but the final effects that should now be coming easily into shape were everywhere hampered by some mean hostility. Enemies seemed to multiply for Talla Goya. Raend, the priest, the devil doctor, and now this Siamese firebrand! How had he been so blind as to expose Talla Goya to the blunderings of Hinsdale? At first he had hoped the man might learn. Then he had been too much a coward to send away a rival. What were his love affairs to Riggs? It was Talla Goya that should have been first.

The inexplicable delays of the Tea Company had been an increasing care. The top of the mountain should have been Talla Goya's long before now. The first cordiality of the offices had been procrastinating but unsuspicious. Lately adverse influences had removed the cordiality. Two journeys to Colombo had been made in vain.

At any rate he wouldn't lie down and let them walk to victory, any of them. He would put Talla Goya where he wanted it yet. He would have it ready to show Riggs. In six months the old man would be there. Barely time if all went well to make the place what it must be.

And Marjorie! His heart cried out for her, for her face like the ivory cups of lilies in its paleness, her eyes burning under the lashes that sheltered them, the bronze glories in her dark hair when the sun glowed on it, the grip of her slender hand, the slim, strong, sweet strength of her,—he thought of them all and forgot them. What did it matter to him what guise she wore! She was Marjorie. Her eyes—he harked back—they had never the soft dullness of the houri's, always the brown of rivers washing red rocks, the brown of pools where the sun strikes deep and shines in warm light and quick flashes. Her eyes, as they had met his when she had sung the song of the Trusty Chum—He brought himself up with a savage jerk. It was no time to dream. Life was something harder and fiercer. A man must fight, above all must fight himself.

Kandy lies half-way up on the slopes, placid in its loveliness as a belle whose beauty has never been disputed. West saw neither the loveliness of the lake of Sri Wrikema nor the far wall of the Matele hills. The railway that had carried him faithfully

and fast the last of his way, climbing slopes where once exhausted animals had planted slowly advancing feet, waked but a mild response in the engineer. Pictures printed on his mind came out later like impressions on an unconscious film.

Raend was in Kandy. He had not yet secured an interview with the Great Man. So much West discovered the night of his arrival. In the panorama of priests, temples, palm-leaf fans, red-tiled monastery, and costumes new to his eyes, West watched for but one figure. The rest was phantasy.

In the morning he left the Queen's Hotel before the place was astir, and planted himself moveless where he could observe any outgoing from the Bannerman bungalow. Oblivious of the beauty of the cream-tinted pillars of the Bannerman veranda and the lavish glories of the Bannerman shrubbery, he kept a lynx eye open for Park-Denby. A late entrance West had himself beheld the night before, when the Bannerman party had returned from the Pavilion. If the Great Man had since left the spot, he must have been conveyed through the air, unless he had gone forth in the deadest of the dead hours.

At the earliest possible moment West presented himself. The youth just out from England who was acting as buffer between Park-Denby and a clamorous world was polite but vague.

Would Mr. West call next week? The young man looked at West as new-comers in Zululand once looked at the aborigine.

Mr. West could not wait till next week. He could not wait till the next day. He would, with permission of the Just-Out, sit where he was till he could see the Honorable Park-Denby. He wanted hardly more than ten minutes of the Great One's invaluable time, but he believed the ten minutes important to both of them.

The young man seemed a little convinced, not by the words, but by Mr. West's manner. To tell the truth—this with reluctance—the Honorable Park-Denby was engaged to meet Sir John Carmichael at Peradeniya and show him about. Mr. West doubtless knew that the great botanist's time to study the *flora* of Ceylon was brief.

Mr. West regretted his ignorance. He had been a little out of the way of knowing things.

"I shall have to intrude myself on Mr. Park-Denby and his distinguished companion," he said with a smile pleasantly invincible. "I am sure Mr. Carmichael——"

"Sir John Carmichael——"

"I am sure Sir John will be interested in what I have to say. It may not intimately concern the *flora*, but it is good copy under the head of manners and customs. You are sure that Mr. Park-Denby has started——"

"Another man had the same notion about seeing him. He's already gone to Peradeniya. Awfully persistent chap. Met me on the street. Had to tell him in order to get away. 'Fraid two of you——"

"You are sure that Mr. Park-Denby has already gone?" West interrupted the amiable Buffer.

"I'm interested in manners and customs. Perhaps I can help you out." West turned and looked steadily into the eyes of a particularly well-dressed man who looked steadily back at him. I'm a director of the Oriental Tea Company. Anything you have to say to Park-Denby should interest me." The man touched a distinctive mustache with an authoritative forefinger, and waved a hand toward the room beyond. "Let no one else in, Bowlby," he ordered.

An hour later Mr. Bowlby was still turning away the really important who wanted speech with the Great Man. These were personages. Yet the person from nowhere was not gone. Mr. Bowlby sighed. His rôle of Cerberus had palled.

Raend pacing the India Rubber Avenue, studying the *Corypha Umbraculifera* under the kindly tutelage of Sir John, who was pleased with an audience while he awaited the delinquent, would have been less at ease if he could have "sensed" the conference back in Kandy.

The alias of *Director* had not deceived West. Every one knew Park-Denby.

"We don't want to go into the manufacture of tea as a business," West was saying. "There are other things that make an estate look more beautiful. What we want is to control the river."

"It strikes me as a perfectly satisfactory arrangement," the Great Man was replying. "We sell you a lot of land we're not using, and you promise never to let that land be used for a rival tea business, and to give us an option on it if you sell. Or to rent us as many acres of it as can safely be taken away from the protection of the stream." He ran his finger along the printed heading of the Upper Burmah Gazette, and recapitulated the things that finished the agreement.

"That about covers it," he ended.

"Unless you want the clause about our furnishing you power at a fair rate."

"Good. I've met your Zenas Riggs. Interesting old fellow; eh, what? One of the self-made men who seems to have escaped worshiping his maker."

"He's as simple and modest as—" West paused.

"*A girl* is the usual ending. You're leaving Kandy—when?"

"When can the papers be ready?" West rose.

"This afternoon. Going to settle out here, Mr. West? There's a chance in Ceylon for the right man, you know."

"With capital. Not much for the understrapper on a salary, it seems to me."

"No reason why the right man shouldn't have capital if he has your start and your knowledge. Ever thought of doing legitimately what the Lanka people wanted you to do on the sly?"

"I think Major Ellinwood had some idea of organizing a company——"

"Not so bad either. Not so bad. Write Riggs about it. I'd like to see your Talla Goya. Like to see what you've done out there. Could you put me up a bit at the end of this month? I know men who might go into this power business if it started on straight lines."

"We should certainly be 'puffed up with majestick prude' to make you our first guest!" West's face gave force to the invitation.

"You forget your friend Raend."

"First invited guest."

"The fellow surely stamped my people with the impression that you were getting a tea estate started there in disguise. They'll have one unhappy moment when they know I've sold out to Talla Goya!"

"I've been trying to get the thing straight to headquarters for months, but I couldn't find out when you were expected."

"I try never to be expected—keep them guess-

ing, as you say in New York. And I'm growing lazy."

"I don't think it's been noticed." West's laugh had more of the boy in it than had been there for a twelvemonth.

They had opened the door, and the relieved Bowlby stood waiting, the hour's sheaves of notes and invitations in his hands.

"Keep your latch-string out," said the Great Man in farewell.

"Doors wide open till you come," answered West.

The young man just out took intense and earnest notice of West. "Looks as if he'd been where Adam delved and Eve span," said the astute Bowlby, "but he's no bounder."

Ravishing climate of Kandy! It was wasted on West. To him Kandy would have seemed ravishing if it had been built on a bog with a perpetual blizzard.

Before night he had in his pocket the deed that added the mountain top to Talla Goya.

Burden was not there to share his jubilation. He had left notes in every spot where West was likely to be found, calling attention to the glories of the landscape.

"I'm off," he wrote, "to Nuwara Eliya—in the clouds where they *need a fire*. Think of it, Ravvy. (I heard about your river, Ravvy, always 'recker-

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less.' I'm not over it yet. The news came from Goddewana by the mouth of his former teacher. Don't do it again.) When you get this I shall be wearing my woolies. There's a sanatorium up there where I shall engage a bed for you 'agin the time' when Talla Goya bowls you over. Don't you feel a twinge or a lassitude or something? Just enough to send you after me?"

West laughed, and caught the late train; he would be at Talla Goya by another nightfall.

"When we get our road built out to Kurunawalla," he said cheerfully to himself, "we shall do better than this."

Success with the river had made him rise hopeful to his more anxious quest. How had it been with Marjorie and Hinsdale in his absence? He went back to the old question, but with a difference. Whatever happened he wouldn't give up without trying.

Raend, overstocked with unwelcome acquisitions in natural history, was still waiting his turn at Park-Denby.

CHAPTER XVIII

A WEAK MAN HESITATES ON THE VERGE OF VILLAINY

"ARE the lines ready? I've got the men. They'll be here an hour after daylight. I stopped at Barua to make certain. They wanted one more night for some festivity:"

West spoke cheerfully. He was back at the barrack-like camp. Hinsdale, glowering from the window into the early night, gave him a lukewarm greeting. West was tired enough and drenched and hungry enough to have appreciated a genuine welcome. He could not be said to miss what he had not expected, but he was conscious of a sinking of his hopeful mood.

"There's no hurry about the lines. Let the beggars stick up a few leaves for a day or two."

"You haven't built them!" West scrubbing a towel over his wet hair stopped and waited. Water ran in puddles from his soaked clothing. He had come through a lively shower.

"Wasn't worth while. Three of the men were sick. They said the new fellows could build their own. Supiah told you they'd expect to."

"These wouldn't expect to. You knew that. I told you that I had promised them houses already built."

There was significance in the silence.

"I've got to keep that promise."

"You can't."

"See here, Hinsdale. We might as well have this out. Why are you against me instead of with me? What's up?"

Hinsdale still looked sullenly from the window. But he started at the tone in which West spoke. He wished he had built the lines, but Supiah had gone to the hills with West's permission, to carry the sick child. In her father's absence, Anitchi had been more beguiling, more accessible. After all he had told the truth. The new men ought to build their own houses. He drew himself up, swelling out with a kind of foolish swagger.

"You forget yourself," he snapped.

"I remember that I've put up with this sort of example here at Talla Goya too long. What is it, John Hinsdale? What's eating you?"

"I can't give up my right to my own opinions, to please any man," blustered Hinsdale turning.
"You're too dictatorial."

"You knew who took the blame and the responsi-

bility. You didn't talk about opinions when you made the agreement. Why can't you stick to it?"

"You've shown your contempt for my advice ever since we got here. You're a little too anxious to rub in your position."

West's face showed the strain he put upon himself. "She cares for the man," his under consciousness was repeating bitterly.

"I've consulted you and deferred to you when it would have been better for me and for Talla Goya if I hadn't. Every cent I spend on this work is another man's money. Every second I waste is another man's time. I've wasted too much of both pandering to your sour-belly humors. Now what's the matter? Out with it."

"If you're dissatisfied, why don't you discharge me?"

"Because I've thought you were sick. If you can't stand by your contract, I've got to get on by myself."

"Do I understand you want me to go?"

"It's come to that or some change that's more than skin deep."

"I've been expecting you'd find some excuse for getting me away. But you're too late for that, too late to have a clear field with Marj——"

"Leave that out." West spoke in a tone quiet enough so the ticking of a tin clock on the table sounded like church bells in a country Sunday.

Hinsdale backed from his position, and took up his place again at the window.

For the first time, West had seen in the man's face the lines of sullen selfishness of which Burden had warned him. This was not like the Hinsdale he had known at home, the Hinsdale he had brought to Talla Goya, but a new man grown rank in this strange soil.

Hinsdale considered the situation with alarm.

"To tell the truth," he began in a different tone, "I don't know any more than a baby what I'm saying. For God's sake, forget it—"

West regarded the broad back fixedly. Then he crossed the room to the window.

"You mean, you're sick?"

Haggard with his passion for the girl whose beauty tormented him the more for her coldness, worn with his own envies and hates and indulgences, Hinsdale looked sick enough to bear out West's old idea that his behavior was due to some disease engendered by the climate.

"I am sick," he blurted. "Sick as a dog. I simply couldn't do that work. I was used up." The lying excuse came with the rough sound of truth.

"Get to bed, man, then, and get well. We'll cut out the rest, and pitch in and make this place the biggest thing yet."

West's response woke a grumbling compunction in Hinsdale's breast. Even now he felt West's

virile charm, his clean sincerity. He could do it, "cut out" the past, cherish no grudge if the future made good. Hinsdale knew it, and knew it was a thing beyond his own power. More than ever he hated West for the lie he felt had been dragged from him.

West's own weariness was real, not assumed. But he tended the supposed sick man, bundling him into bed and setting water to heat, before he stripped himself out of his own already mildewed clothes.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Hinsdale from his side of the low partition, as West began dressing again. "They're in bed at the bungalow."

"My job's the other way." West's exasperation rose once more. It was indecent of a successful lover, if that was what Hinsdale was, to warn him off so belligerently. The manager of Talla Goya went quickly out, and Hinsdale stealthily peered after him to see which direction he took. The moon was making its way through a wrack of clouds. The air was heavy, and a sudden access of heat wrung rivers of moisture from every living being.

West went briskly to the carefully built palm roof that sheltered Goddewana, and the brown man came out to him. At a whistle Siwwá appeared, and the three conferred.

Hinsdale wondered. Later he woke from a doze and peered again into the night. The moon was

now well out, a little breeze stirring among the fronds of the tall palms. He could see nothing of West. Jealousy suggested a thousand futile impossibilities. He opened the door and listened. Then he dressed and stole out among the shadows, hiding from the moon. At the footbridge across the river sounds came to his ears and guided him. He slipped his big body more quietly through the shining-leaved yams beyond the cocoa grove, and reached the point where he could see.

In the center of a hive-like activity, West was at work, stopping only to brush the insects out of his blinded eyes. While Hinsdale watched, the activity came to a halt. The men, herded by Goddewana, gathered round West. West, mounted on a stump, under the light of the moon and of the arc lamps he had himself put in place before his journey, harangued the group in their own Singhalese. Now and then they laughed. When, at the end, he asked a question, they shouted assent, laughing still, and went back to their building. Under their skilful hands, the new huts, simple as a child's house of cards, were fast going up.

The only word Hinsdale understood was *promise*. "Promising them extra pay no doubt! As if they didn't belong to him while they're here!" What a fool he had been to be got around by the man's tongue! West managed everybody the same way. It was all one to him, Tamil or Singhalese or his

assistant! Assistant! Hinsdale said over the word as if there were in it some disgrace.

They wanted to be rid of him, all of them. Marjorie and the Major and West. Perhaps he'd better go. That was what people always wanted—to be rid of him. Because they couldn't use him for their own ends. False suspicions, false self-pity, all the slimy creatures that infested his mind, crawled at his ear, substituted their own images for the truth, woke into writhing vigilance. The multitude of them was now too great for him. Bred and brooded into unnumbered swarms, they owned him.

The sight of West's unconscious grace as he had stood, hands thrust into his pockets, bent a little toward the men, his blue eyes blazing cheerfully and dynamically on theirs, had wounded the spirit of the watcher not with the clean knife-cut of a man's jealousy, but with the jagged tear of a self-tortured vanity. Slinking through the shadows, he returned to the camp. His head in his hands, he sat a long time thinking, having glimpses of the way he had come. Almost tempted at one moment to go out and join West and put all his big strength and persistent mind into the task he had wilfully neglected. A sick horror of the compact he had made in West's absence, a compact with Raend, never once uttered in actual words, whereby Raend's scheme should be carried out, and Talla Goya taken out of West's hands to fall possibly into his own, seemed like some

nightmare of the moon-haunted dark. He need do nothing. Of course, if the thing were run into the ground by West's folly, that was another matter. After all he would have nothing to do with it. He wondered if he were not really ill. His body ached with the effort of his thoughts.

Perhaps he had exaggerated Marjorie's repulse. She was not the girl to take by storm. A more gentle approach, something that would startle her less, would have been better. How could the girl know the tumult that had been growing in him all these months? Months! When a day was torment! The miracle was, he told himself, that he had borne it. In the morning he would make an apology, something straightforward and frank and appealing. That pleased a girl. Then he would begin again.

So Hinsdale fell asleep, his great frame spent with his passion, and in his dreams, uncontrolled as before, he crushed and kissed the woman he loved till she was dead in his arms, and then he hurled her lifeless body into the Talipal and saw it float away upon the stream.

He woke exhausted with his mimic ecstasy and its brutal end, and, standing before the glass covered with patches of the same white mould that had grown upon his coat-sleeve while he slept, he studied the thick wave of hair above his forehead, and the features of a face still fine of outline. It was a

head and face to have won adoring love from one who would have leaned on his great strength and loved him for it. This was in his mind as he brushed himself carefully, looked again into the glass, nodded as if satisfied, and went out. The morning was close at hand.

CHAPTER XIX

CHAIRS AND THEIR POSITION: THE DAWN THAT GAVE IT THE LIE

THE work had been a good anodyne for pain, but it had left West with harsher realization. When Goddewana and the brown men had been dismissed to their delayed slumbers, he still stood looking along the line of huts from which the refuse had been cleared away. Except for Lilith, he was alone.

Patiently she had brought logs and handed thatch. Now contented at the end of this unaccustomed night-toil, she moved slowly, bearing down through the broad band of electric light toward her compound. Beside her ambled her calf.

Why had not Marjorie reminded Hinsdale of the huts? Was her mind poisoned by Hinsdale's bitterness? Had she lost faith in her comrade of the months they had lived out together in plans for Talla Goya, in the man by whose side she had given thought and pains to the delight of mutual creation?

Even if she loved Hinsdale—The thought stopped there, twisting its barb where it struck in.

Would he have had more chance, he wondered, if he had let the Major go, if he had shirked the evenings with the man's reminiscences, and the days when the need for providing him with work had seemed the last straw to an overburdened mind. Talla Goya had gained by it, but Marjorie? Had she been left to grow more friendly with Hinsdale, had she misunderstood, thinking West chose the Major's society to keep himself from greater intimacy with a woman? It seemed incredible.

Why shouldn't a girl like Hinsdale? Hinsdale's ways were more suited to most women, he had more pretty speeches for them. But Marjorie had not been like most women. When had she changed? What had made the difference, unless she was in love with another man?

Round and round the circle of his inferno, West traveled, unable to ignore the corroding fire. If only they had met as men and women meet in the world outside, perhaps—But even that comfort was not his. Wherever they had met, the vision of her would have thrilled him. Yet it might not then have mastered him body and soul, every thought and every nerve alive and exalted with a passion whose tenderness must not be expressed. If only they had not worked together! Love born of holidays, of casual seasons of play and laughter and

idleness, can be held in a man's grip, and if need be killed; but love born close to a man's work, grown through days of active living, its tendrils twined and intertwined with every hour's minutest labor, that love cannot be killed! For every hurt, it puts forth a thousand shoots, it is the love of lovers, and the passion of maturer years, the love grown beyond all bounds of the mere callow wooing of other men for girls they marry! It is the love of a man for his wife, without the joy of possession. And to see a woman so loved turn to another man! The betrayed husband could endure an agony no greater.

The jackals, sending back their last yapping cries, were getting away into the deeper wood. The sound of Lilith's soft munching came from the compound beyond an open gate. He wandered restlessly inside, and leaned against her rough flank, and she lifted her trunk and breathed moistly into his neck.

The wind that goes before the morning, cooling, deceptive, blew over West's exhausted body, as he moved out into the open, roused by Lilith's investigating trunk to a sense of where he was. He had no right to court illness with Talla Goya unfinished, though what he was to do with the years after—

Mechanically he set out, walking briskly, as if he had some goal; mechanically, too, he noticed from long habit the succession of wakening life. The

deep-toned bark of the elk was already rousing the echoes of the river gorge. Every sound was part of the comradeship he had lost. It was from Marjorie that he had learned the strange ways of these strange woods. Bats passed him swooping homeward from their fruit-hunting. Five o'clock. It lacked an hour to muster time.

On the veranda of the old bungalow, two chairs close together as if their occupants had sat in confidential talk, increased his misery. Hinsdale did not act like an accepted lover, whatever his words had implied! Perhaps the two were in that stage just before certainty, where each is troubled. Surely in Hinsdale's bravado was some hidden source of confidence.

The new bungalow gardens were already in blossom. And every flower was hers, every mass of shade and color, every cascade of vine and foliage. Far back from the house, set against the cliff that ended the plateau, was a lofty pergola built of red-brown rock. Over it Cape jessamine and pale pink and yellow roses flung sweetness and greenery and bloom. From the pergola floor, in fair weather, the whole valley was open to the view. On the wall of the cliff behind, purple passion flowers marked the trailing moss.

Toward this place, made of Marjorie's dreams and his dream-in-work, he mounted in fierce haste,

as if he could not drive deep enough the pain that harried him.

Love and desperate repression, the energy with which he had held himself to work when the need of her and the longing for her had fought to hinder him, revenged themselves. The pilot's hand loosened, the wheel spun horribly, bruising him under with each revolution.

"Marjorie!" he cried, but soundlessly. And again half aloud, "Marjorie." He was alone. This one moment of acknowledgment he would have.

A sound answered him, unconscious of his presence, lonely as his own cry. He had stopped half-way up the terrace to turn toward the old bungalow. The world was barely touched with a dim prescience of dawn. West listened and heard the sound again. In an instant he had bounded up the remaining distance to the pergola, and bent over the figure flung and fallen on the stones in the last attitude of unheeding grief.

She had not heard him come. She was blind, deaf, gone utterly away from the place where she lay. The ghastly hopelessness in the weeping of a woman whose tears come but once or twice in a lifetime, put West beside himself. In the dark they seemed more dreadful. But in spite of the dark he knew her.

"Marjorie!"

Now she heard. Horror was stamped on her swollen face, looked out of her dark eyes through her tears, clenched her lips despairingly over her cry. West, close to the shaken figure, felt what the shadows did not reveal.

"You!" She was on her feet, clinging to the rose-colored pillar, weak in her agony, defiant in her surprise, and before she could speak more than that one word or try to pass him, the tenderness of the man's soul, shocked beyond all self-consciousness, had its way.

In his arms, held mightily, listening to the incoherence that poured over her, cradled and comforted in the frantic haste of anxious love, Marjorie first tried to draw herself upright as if she would speak, then leaned to him, childlike, torn again with the sobbing misery that would not let her go.

Light grew fast upon the hilltops, pouring red and orange across the gray horizon, draining color through shadowy green and streaks of violet till the sapphire mountains burned blue against a daffodil sky.

Then Marjorie raised her eyes and looked into West's, a long and solemn gaze, a gaze wide and strange, as if she still thought of flight.

"Tell me, Marjorie," he pleaded in the undertone of a world where all but one thing is forgotten. "No one can love you more. Even if you cannot love me back, tell me what it is. Let me help you."

"You don't love me—You only pity—" Shamed, she would have torn herself away, but his next words held her, his eyes poured truth into the truth of hers, and his whole vibrant body flooded her with assurance. Color rose in the white cheeks, stronger than the redness of her weeping, burning flame-like even over her small ears and beneath the shadowy hair, a great shining glowed in the dark eyes. Then she raised her arms and drew his face close.

"I love you so; I—love you so." The words came in half-breathed gasps desperately wrung from desperate pain. For West the world went dark till wine-red color filled it, and a divine wind bore him into space. Whether he spoke or did not speak, whether he kissed her eyes, her hair, once or a thousand times, whether she stirred or lay still as the dead in his arms, he did not know. In the light of the morning, neither seeing it nor knowing to what world they were taken up, they stood one creature before the face of day.

In the first moment of returning consciousness of the earth that supported them, he swept clear a place upon the step, and sat beside her.

The hot wind came across the valley, cooling on the mountain in films of mist, and breathed warm and fragrant about their feet. His arms were still around her, her body leaned to his, her dark head

on his shoulder, in her whole quiet figure trust and peace.

“Marjorie,” he said, and lower still so the word barely found her ear, “Marjorie.” To West the sweetness of the roses and all the glow of the morning were in the word.

CHAPTER XX

SANCTUARY: THE DEVIL SEES

HER face was all marred by her weeping; her steady lips still tremulous, her eyes still misty with the ghost of her tears, but she was more beautiful to West than ever in all the months of their comradeship. Grief had made her more human, more near. The aloofness, the quality of the sprite or wood creature whose loving was apart from him, no longer existed. The fierce reserve of a nature reticent and seclusive from its very birth, its strong-hold built in the last years with double walls to defend a hidden trouble, he had seen broken down before him, but at what cost! There was something greater than a man's love for a maid, in the tenderness with which his clasp enclosed her, in the look he turned on her.

The early butterflies swam and sauntered in great companies of floating blue across the primrose air. West's eyes followed them unseeing.

"They said you—were engaged." She spoke

at last with effort, and her hand trembled where it rested on his arm.

"I never was engaged." West answered quickly, almost harshly.

"Mr. Hinsdale said so."

West's face flashed with instant anger. But he answered quietly. "I can't bear to talk of it now —Marjorie. It's desecration. But I suppose you ought to know more about me than any one can tell you."

"Yes," she assented in a half breath of waiting.

"Once"—West spoke with distaste—"I thought I cared for a girl in New York. It was the feeling that a good many young fellows have for a woman of their species, a little attraction and a good deal of glitter made up of the girl's surroundings, and that was all. It was over before I came away. She refused me, and I thank God for that." West spoke with fervor. For the first time the grim thought came to him that he might have been engaged to marry Virginia Wakeman. In the perspective of six thousand miles, Virginia had worn no glamour. It was so long since he had thought of her that remembrance was an effort.

"Now, what's your confession? Were you ever——" West grasped her with an energy that hurt.

"Only in a schoolgirl kind of way, over a man

I never said ten words to. After I came out here he wrote to me."

"Then?"

"Nothing 'then.' I sent the specimen he asked for—a plant—He wrote five times. I never wrote at all. I didn't want him to come out here. I—" She broke off. "I had forgotten him," she ended.

West hated that man, unreasonably. The man who had seen her first and wanted her. Of course he had wanted her!

Marjorie was thinking of Virginia. Jealousy of the past hurt her with its thousand questions.

"Those two years when you were here alone—I've often tried to see them, to know what you went through." West interrupted her thoughts.

A shudder seized her. In her face was the look West had seen once when a shivering terrier and a frightened elephant were tortured together in one cage at the zoo; Marjorie's look made him think of the terrier's eyes.

"Tell me about it. Then forget it," he said.

"I can never forget it." She paused as a white crane, fluttering awkwardly from the tree close by, stalked away from them toward the river. West feared he should not have spoken.

"I am not fit to make any one happy. Such memories—They sadden me when I—against my will. Deering began it. Then he, my father, grew not—

in the least—like himself. When Deering went, he often did not speak for days. And he would not—at first—let me interfere. The nights—I was all alone—Sometimes he stayed away. Sometimes he was all night in the living-room, not knowing me. How can I tell you such things! It isn't right. It's over now. I am proud of my father. And you can see for yourself what he was——”

“I knew. Of course I knew or guessed all you could tell me. But there ought to be one creature living you can talk to—Then we can both put it away forever. I only worship you the more.”

She had hidden her face as if it told too much of the old pain.

“And your father, dearest, listen. Few men could have pulled out as he has done. It takes will, such will as no man dares to say he has till he's tried. Many a man with worse faults gets off scot free as far as the world goes, but this thing betrays itself, and every fool dares to judge. He is a brave man. I am proud of him too—Marjorie.”

Her hands closed tight on his. “You did it. We never could have gone through with it alone. Away from Talla Goya, he would have met old friends, and there would have been uncertainty—money—O I have known! All you have done! You have taken him, taken care of him, ever since you came. Did you think for one moment there was anything I did not see? Didn't you know I was

on my knees to you for staying with him when you would rather——”

“Have been with you——”

“Or working in the camp or——”

“It brought me near you. It wasn’t much, but it was good to do. Whatever was your care was mine——”

“I knew—I knew. Ah—” The grip of her hands strengthened—“You can never know how dreadful it has been to feel afraid I’d shown too much—And last night—He was restless. I could not sleep. I came up here—I was a coward. The thought that I must go on alone——”

“You can never be alone again. In God’s universe I should find you. If there’s anything to face, we’ll face it together.”

She laid her cheek against the rough flannel, her strained look relaxed to unmeasured peace.

“I’m not fit for you to touch, dear. I’ve been at work all night.”

A great wave of color poured again over her face and lit new fires in her dark eyes.

“It’s heaven to be here,” she said quickly, and again the words seemed torn from her, part of herself given tangibly in their utterance.

West turned her face up to his and looked into the eyes, his own filled with the same flame. Then, his gaze in hers, he kissed her. When he released her, her hands lying still in his grasp, she smiled

solemnly, happily, and sank back to the place in his arms with a deep breath of comfort.

For the first time, into West's blessedness came the poignant sense of her physical nearness; it mingled a sharper ecstasy with the exaltation. It warmed his cheeks and made the clasp in which he held her more than ever vibrant.

Spent with her night's misery, her body responded to the change, and her face clouded in a soft confusion.

Gentle lest he should startle her and grasp brutally at what she was not ready to give, West laid his cheek against her white temple. But thrusting him back she lifted her head, fearless, unashamed, and, even while confusion flowed in deep waves over her tear-marked face, she took him fast, and soberly gave him back his kiss. In the long tropic nights and in the crowding days, dreams had multiplied in West's soul, dreams of hope made real, of love acknowledged, but there had been no dream, no hope, to match the fulfilment.

Day pouring steadily over the mountain top, had flooded the valley and filled the world. Below them in the garden a yellow oriole fluted to his mate. Bronze-winged creatures perched and swung in the radiance of the mounting sun. On the mountain the Hammer of the Gods beat its fervent rhythm.

They seemed alone in the world's sanctuary.

She rose suddenly and her face sought the sky,

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as if the Heaven that gave it should take the incense of her love. West's eyes were on her, as if he understood. Reverently he drew her close, and together they leaned against the red-brown pillar among the roses and the heavy sweet jessamine, and looked out across the shining valley to the hills.

As they stood, the light full in their faces, Hinsdale came unnoticed into the garden and saw them, and while he watched, Marjorie's hand went up to her lover's shoulder, and West, lifting it, laid it against his lips.

CHAPTER XXI

AN UNREGARDED WARNING

WEST forgot that he had not slept, and when the new coolies had been set to their road-making, he plunged with more than his old energy into work. From every part of Talla Goya rose the sound of labor. The slow beat of the hammer crushing stone, the song of the Tamils weeding the cacao nursery, the shout of the Major superintending the pruning of the dadop trees, the musical chatter of the Singhalese putting up wires under Goddewana's direction, the crash of yielding roots where Lilith dragged reluctant scrub from under fig and palm. Everywhere big lamps, and in the fruit and vegetable gardens curious images, served as scarecrows for the behoof of jungle pigs. The images, suggested by the night at the river, were Goddewana's joy. On them the village carver had expended much ingenious devising. On dark nights, their lighted eyes shone fearlessly from the midst of groves and parsnip beds.

West left the Major, and taking the new road to the rice paddy, finished his circuit. The water tanks were full, the sluices clear, the pumps working. He stopped angrily at the cattle sheds, discovering that the beasts had been left fastened native fashion, when he had ordered that they be turned out into their green inclosure. The filter that preserved them from the festering hold of water pests had not been cleaned. The drinking troughs were dry and stale. The low-caste boy who should have given them their breakfast and their freedom was gone. West did the work himself, anxious about this desertion. It would not be easy to replace the fellow. This was the third defection in two days. Some fear was at work among these men.

He made the round of the stables, and, coming out into the upward path, paused at the sight of a pitiful shrine he had often noticed in a sheltered spot between a stone and the root of a great tree. The poor offerings had been kicked ruthlessly aside, the sacred objects of a superstitious awe trampled in the mud. The thing gave him grave uneasiness.

His tour of inspection finished, he made his way quickly to the bungalow to consult Marjorie about the defilement of the *saami*, but lingered at the threshold, fearing to put the morning's wonder to the test. It might prove a dream.

The deep flush that poured again over her cheeks at sight of him confirmed the shining joy of the day. But her eyes did not falter in meeting his, and in them was all the old comradeship restored. He had found his mate, and not lost his chum.

The great glory of the content that enveloped him kept him waiting before he told his tale of the wantonly injured shrine.

"I fixed it up, but they'll know the difference. There's some malice at work about the place."

"Devils, the men will say. River devils. It means trouble," she ended. "Some enemy."

"Hinsdale believes Goddewana works against us on the sly, but that's rot. I'd stake anything on Goddewana."

"It isn't Goddewana."

"It can't be the *widerale*. He wouldn't disturb a *saami*. Raend isn't about. Perhaps some of the Mohammedan Moormen. Hinsdale got the last one up on his ear—"

"It's not the natives only—My father thinks—"

"What? Something he hasn't told me?"

"He thinks you trust Mr. Hinsdale too much. There are a quantity of things that need explaining. I wanted him to tell you, but he was afraid you would think it was—"

West had reached out and touched a fold of her dress as it lay against the low arm of the basket

chair. She was busy with the wash that the *dhobie* had brought home, and the piles of fresh linen were heaped on the carved seat beside her. Over her head a great jar of pink oleander warmed the dark-walled bungalow. In her work, in her attitude, were a thousand suggestions of home, of companionship over daily nothings, a thousand delights to West's thoughts. West had never had a home.

"Hinsdale?" he interrupted amazed. Some vague doubt of his assistant's honesty had before assailed him. Put into words, it seemed incredible. "That can't be. He's got a nasty temper, but he's not a scoundrel. Poor old Hinsdale!" In his happiness, West pitied every man not Marjorie's accepted lover. He forgot, too, that Hinsdale's inexplicable absence on that very morning meant to him much inconvenience.

"What have you got against Hinsdale?" he finished curiously. He was thinking of his own jealousy, planning its telling in the confidence of some uninterrupted hour.

Marjorie started as if hurt. The words sounded as though she had been uttering lightly a serious accusation, to gratify some personal spite. The impulse to confide in West her reasons for disliking Hinsdale retreated. She had none of the desire to "tell," for the sake of an effect, that costs so much to human brotherhood. And she had never fathomed the extent to which West cared for his assist-

ant. She had spoken her warning, and she could not look into West's happy eyes and harbor a resentment, whatever he might have meant.

"When will you move into the new bungalow?" West leaned nearer, his hands on his knees.

"We don't seem to belong in the new bungalow.—No, that's not modesty. That seems more Mr. Riggs's own house, and we've rather grown into this shell. I might be homesick for the mould and the ants where there were too many drying machines—"

West had bent close, so close that he was almost kneeling beside her while his hands touched again a fold of her white dress.

"Is it true, Marjorie? You are going to be my wife?—Tell me, is it true?"

And before the answer could be well begun, the Major came panting, wetting afresh the sponge that protected his sandy head, summoning West to immediate discussion of the transplanting. The two went off together.

"Will you call up Goddewana and tell him about the shrine?" West had asked as they started.

Marjorie took down the receiver, and Goddewana was on his way to her before their steps had ceased on the gravel. She had refused to go with them. She could not yet take her joy where Hinsdale might see what was too sacred for discovery, till

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she had herself in better control. Into the radiance of that holy of holies, no one but West should look.

In the late afternoon she was to go with him to put the last touches to the arrangement of the new bungalow, and watch the sunset from the pergola.

While Marjorie waited for Goddewana, she looked at the room whose sagging floor was cool with fresh matting, and up at the white ceiling cloth where a scampering of shadows betrayed excitement among the roof colony, and her look was full of affection. Here in this house she had gone down to the gates of despair, and come up into the happy light of happy days. She sang to herself as she laid her cheek to the petals of the great oleander flower, and the song was a prayer.

Goddewana was still with her, when there came a bustle and stir about the veranda, and the Major, bursting in, threw hat and sponge upon the table in a pother of excitement.

"West's off to Kandy again. Park-Denby's sent for him."

"To-day?"

"Yes. To-day. The man's been summoned to England, and wants to see West before he goes. Jolly good letter. Means good things for Talla Goya. But I call it hard. The boy needs rest."

The blow was not great nor terrible, but the blood drained from Marjorie's heart, and left her sick and still.

"So at the hoof beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained
it."

The words chanted themselves in her ears, but she would not listen. She was not a sensitive plant, to shrink and curl away from a mere sound!

But when West was at the door, his sleepless night showing in faint lines sunken under his blue eyes, her own eyes filled with tears.

There had been no chance for telling the Major.

CHAPTER XXII

AN EVIL WAKING

WEST had gone while the midday breathlessness still lay on the land. Talla Goya was asleep. Beyond the palm grove and the cleared woods, the bullocks found peace in the mud oozing from the rice paddy; under the shade of their compound the cattle lay stretched as close to the comforting earth as their thick covering allowed; the little mouse deer rested in his chosen corner in the shadow of the bungalow, and hidden by a brass lota, Penny coiled in baking seclusion. At the far end of the veranda, the chair-mender slumbered beside his unfinished task.

Brown mothers with brown babies whose soft lips slipped from bare brown breasts, dozed in the lines, and on the platform and beaten earth were dropped the army of the brown men, graceful statues of living bronze.

The sky veiled in an infinitely distant gray was peaceful as the sky that "bent o'er Eden,"

In her hammock, her fine hair brushing the dim red of its coarser fiber, Marjorie "continued thanking God."

"And the days of their mourning are over." She sang the words under her breath, forgetting the foreboding of the hour just gone. Little lizards, darting flashes of green, ran about the loquat trees, and high over her head, so high they seemed to touch a shred of cloud floating in some far-off breeze of the upper air, the fronds of a cocoa palm ruffled and swayed. Her eyes pleased by their motion in a motionless world, she lay looking out and up into the day, and word by word, silence by silence, she re-lived, as West was that moment re-living, the hour of dawn. And at last, as she watched again from his arms the wakening of the valley, she fell into a tranced slumber where forever she gazed into a glowing world, still folded in the arms she loved. Much longer than she meant, she lay moveless in the shelter of the old veranda where West had seen her first.

When she woke the Major stood beside her. In the tunneled shadow of the avenue, strange people were riding toward her. Before her soul could come back from dreams, her father was shaking hands with an old man, and the old man was saying, "Mr. West's fiancée, Major Ellinwood, come out from America to see him," while a beautiful girl with coldly watching eyes stood smiling at them

all. Then she was giving her hand to them, meeting the queerly hostile stare of the girl's companion, and smiling in her turn.

It seemed to her a curious thing that what had happened had left her outwardly the same. She was too young to know how much pain it takes to kill a strong body.

The dreams still in her eyes gave a half-elvish look to her startled gaze, and sleep still warm in her cheeks added to her youth. In her rumpled gown, her soft hair tumbled about her face, she was beautiful as Virginia never would be beautiful.

"This is the time to say in earnest, 'I am content to be dwelling in shadow, if only the sun may shine upon thee,'" laughed Miss Wakeman. "You had the best of it. But you won't any more." She looked with artless intention into Marjorie's eyes.

"I will own," asserted Mrs. Wakeman, "that for finished idling, my daughter has no match in seven continents!"

"Don't flatter so grossly, Mummy dear!" Virginia smiled at her mother, at the hovering Major, and at Mr. Riggs. Then she turned back to Marjorie, a hesitation that might have been shyness in her voice. "Landon—Mr. West, isn't here? We ought to have written, but I wanted—to surprise him."

CHAPTER XXIII

DINNER AND DARKNESS

"WEST's disporting at Kandy," Hinsdale repeated. "He has a convivial friend up there, Jimmy Burden."

"Mr. Burden's in Colombo. We saw him the day we got in," vouchsafed Virginia.

"A crabbed sort of person, is he not?" added Mrs. Wakeman.

"Good fellow, Burden," commented Mr. Riggs.

"How came he in Colombo?" Hinsdale was incredulous. "We heard nothing about it. He was to meet West in Kandy."

"Started for an unpronounceable place in the high mountains, and had some news that changed his mind at the railway station," explained Mr. Riggs. "Talla Goya business."

"He didn't tell us that. Did you see him after we left you?" Virginia reposed with the grace of a leopard on a limb, but she was not asleep.

"We walked a little. Showed me the native

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quarters. Kind of man that pokes around after curios." Zenas Riggs dismissed the subject. He did not add that the walk had taken fifteen minutes, the talk that followed hours.

"Bargaining for a sacred green tumbler or a petrified fish, wasn't he," chuckled Hinsdale. "He's spent days hanging round trumpery shops at Kalu-velli."

Virginia had glanced from one man to the other, with a hint of alertness in her look. It would not have suited her that an intimate friend of West should be too long with Zenas Riggs.

"Who is Mr. Burden? I don't think Landon ever brought him to the house," put in Mrs. Wake-man.

"Rich bachelor who putters round the earth, making dinky little pictures, and writing travel books no one ever prints." Hinsdale was developing Raend's art of creating his facts to suit the emergency. "West's friends seem all cumbered with the ready."

"Sorry not to find West here." Mr. Riggs showed disappointment in a manner frowningly absent.

Marjorie liked Mr. Riggs, but she had no chance to show her liking. Hinsdale had fastened on the owner of Talla Goya.

"Of course if he'd known you were coming, West would have been here," he said now, lower-

ing his own voice as he heard the Major's. Marjorie and her father were near.

"It's all right. I wanted to surprise him."

"I think you will." Hinsdale's tone dropped again. It suggested a complication of hidden meanings.

Ponayeh had brought chairs to an open pagoda perched on a little green mound in the garden. Mr. Riggs raised his feet to the stone bench at the side, looked out through the blue-gray wreaths of thunbergia, and absorbed the view. The gleam of wax-white gardenias lighted the lavender bloom that festooned pillar and roof. The old man broke off a twig of the glossy gardenia, and sniffed at an opening bud.

"Pay seventy-five cents for these at home," he commented. "Always liked a gardenia. Used to want 'em for my buttonhole when I was younger and couldn't afford 'em."

"Miss Ellinwood's going to show us the bungalow. Come, Mr. Riggs!" Virginia spoke like one who expects to be obeyed.

"Guess not. I'll wait." Zenas Riggs settled more firmly in his chair.

Virginia hesitated, then followed her mother.

The Major had lingered below the pagoda, arrested by a suggestive droop in one of the garden trees.

"Mr. West is engaged to Miss Wakeman?"

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Hinsdale put the question hopefully. The thing seemed too good to believe.

"So I'm told." Mr. Riggs lighted a cigar.

"He's always denied it to me."

"Hm!" The old man puffed till the cigar was well alight. "You say he's actually secured the land that controls the water-power here?"

"That was settled on his last trip. If we could have got less land, just the strip along the river, it would have suited my ideas better. However, the company's got the money, and West's got the land, so everybody's happy. West ought to be happy to-night. Suppose he'll be sitting out a dance with some English beauty up there with a cool breeze in his face. Talla Goya's been pretty hot. Tried us all."

Mr. Riggs moved his shoes on the bench so they wouldn't crush a strayed blossom. He said nothing, and Hinsdale went on.

"I'd have waited a month or so to call the Tea Company's bluff. Those people think they own the earth. But then I'm too cautious by nature."

"Sort of human brake on extravagance, eh? What's that?" Mr. Riggs pointed to a huge tree that stood like an emperor in scarlet leaves, more gorgeous from the bright green of the vine that covered the stem.

"An ironwood. Speaking of economy, I was

going for West about his last order for the power plant——”

“Looks like autumn,” said Zenas Riggs. “We’ll talk business to-morrow. I’m going to play to-night.”

“It’s always autumn or spring here in Ceylon,” announced the Major marching up the pagoda steps. He lighted the cigar Mr. Riggs offered, and ensconced himself in the chair Mrs. Wakeman had just left vacant. “It’s the original garden, no doubt of it.”

“Plenty of snakes.” Hinsdale showed that he was bored by the Major.

“Perpetual paradise, and a soil that grows four good crops of potatoes a year! Talla Goya now——”

But Hinsdale interposed. He wanted a few words with Mr. Riggs about Major Ellinwood before the old man was captured by any plans for Talla Goya.

Inside the bungalow, the three women made the tour of the rooms.

“A typical East Indian dwelling,” murmured Mrs. Wakeman.

“Rather exceptional than typical, the second story for instance, and the refrigerated air!” Miss Ellinwood smiled. Patronage directed at her returned on its giver.

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"Dreadful! I shall be expecting a Loop-the-Loop!" Virginia pouted.

"A land slide's our nearest substitute. It might prove quite as exciting. The old settlers would please you. They abhor changes."

"Some changes are rather shocking," replied Virginia. "I should think you'd hate to have Talla Goya finished, and everybody go away."

"O, everybody never goes away from anywhere. An Englishman's daughter is more afraid of leaving others behind than of being left herself. I hope you're noticing the yellow stripes in this chocolate wainscot? It's the natural edge of the tamarind wood."

Beside Virginia's *double entendre*, Marjorie felt that her own simple directness seemed crass; her dress, however trimly belted and appropriate for the woods, a mere child's garment compared with the gown Virginia wore. And Virginia moved about the bungalow as she had come down the garden paths, the natural chatelaine of beauty.

"The flowers," Marjorie went on, "Muni Andi must have arranged himself."

"Rather nasty and smelly, so many, don't you think? Native taste is so barbaric!" Virginia wrinkled her straight nose in a little grimace. Muni Andi, listening just without for the expected praise, moved noiselessly away. Yellow bells of the alamander, sweet yellow champac, curly cream-

colored blossoms of the temple flower, that had brought the note of the sun into the chocolate shade of the room, got no praise from Virginia. She was saving her ardors.

"The men who came with our horses—really to get to windward of them was appalling," sighed Virginia, mounting the stairs.

"But their skins, aren't they beautiful?" Marjorie waited on the landing for Mrs. Wakeman, whose amplitude required too stiff a lacing for rapid climbing.

Virginia yawned. "I never took much interest in colored people," she answered.

Ponayeh, passing below from the cook's quarters to the table, looked up at Marjorie, and Marjorie saw the anger in the boy's eyes.

"You make me think of Mr. Hinsdale," she said to the bored Virginia.

"Really, now! Landon's taste must be restricted, all his friends are alike!" Virginia, conscious of some criticism in Marjorie's words, showed more animation in her rejoinder.

"No, indeed," Marjorie laughed, with no intent but honesty. "Mr. Burden isn't in the least like either of you."

The tables and dresser of the bedchamber they had entered glowed at them in the soft amber of the maruta wood; blue convolvulus wreathed the trellises outside.

"How dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Wakeman. But Virginia yawned again.

"You must forgive me, Miss Ellinwood," she apologized indifferently. "I am so sleepy after riding."

"I'm afraid the disappointment, not finding Landon here," began the mother. "Why don't you rest? You can see all this after he comes."

"It is cooler out of doors. Will you go down to the veranda?" Marjorie would gladly have ended the inspection. This was the hour when she and West were to have watched the sunset.

But Mrs. Wakeman lingered.

"It's all just too lovely, Mr. Riggs!" Virginia effervesced with girlish enthusiasm the moment she returned to the garden. "I want to go up to that pergola."

Mr. Riggs rose. "I'd like to get up there," he said.

"Hasn't Mr. West the most exquisite taste, for a man!" Virginia slipped her arm confidingly in Marjorie's. "No one ever sent such flowers as Landon West."

"It was fortunate—he was so hurt if you didn't carry or wear them." Mrs. Wakeman, holding her skirts away from the path, was on Marjorie's other side. She turned an interrogative look on the girl of the jungle. Was West already deeply involved

with this slight bit of provincial arrogance—*English arrogance*, she amended.

"Don't be a fool," Virginia had reassured her mother. "The girl has no style and no color." But Mrs. Wakeman feared.

Overhung by ferns and drooping branches of tall poinsettias, a brook ran bubbling on the slope. Little cascades swirled among the roots of clinging balsams. On a quiet pool floated lotos flowers, rose and azure, and silver and gold. Across the face of the terrace, the periwinkle ran in a sunset fire. Set each in its own greenery, blue clitoria and orange venusta, mignonette and giant geranium trees, dwelt here in peace together.

A tropical garden! Magnified flowers of home, and generous glories of native bloom; lavish, friendly, responsive growth of magical lands!

"I've meant to see this ever since I went to the district school," said Zenas Riggs. He was thinking of a page in the old geography, where the armadillo mysteriously walked with the tiger, and the zebu herded with the wild elephant in a marvel of foliage never beheld by man.

"Quite so," endorsed the Major. "Ceylon's the place for a garden. Sweet-smellin' flowers and singin' birds and all the color.—Where else would you find it? And buried cities! Cities that were great in the time of Ptolemy—just dug out by main force from the jungle. It gives you a thrill—even

an old, yellow-skinned traveler like me! It's the island of romance, sir, romance!"

They were at the pergola. Marjorie came to her father's side.

The running water and the shivering plantains made a sound of coolness in the air. The fine spray of a fountain gleamed between them and the sun, like rain in a celestial city.

To Marjorie the steps of the pergola were hot plowshares.

"Tired?" asked Zenas Riggs.

"I'm never tired," Marjorie laughed. But, unseen, the old man frowned as he led the way to the house.

Ponayeh had summoned them, respectful, but anxious; the dinner must not be cold. Muni Andi, Ponayeh's uncle, just arrived from an estate at Barua, had given four hours of vigorous thought and all the resources of cans and live stock, to the preparation of this meal. Even his assistants had caught the spirit of stern ambition with which he had worked. If he pleased these employers of his nephew, they might retain him forever as cook to the miraculous bungalow.

"I call that beautiful!" Mr. Riggs, on the threshold of the dining-room, uttered his first word of praise. Ponayeh rushed on silent feet to tell Muni Andi. They had come from one garden into another. Golden mohur and crimson hibis-

cus, silver-backed ferns and frangipani, framed them. On the shining cloth great bowls of golden water-lilies cast an arabesque of shadow, and about the damask, Muni Andi's special touch, meandered patterns seen in Eastern rugs, traced with lines of red and black olinda seed.

"What do you like best in Talla Goya?" asked Hinsdale as Virginia tasted with open surprise her highly edible soup.

"The nose-rings," answered the girl, promptly. "And your bronze Mercury here. Better lock him up. I shall steal him. I feel it in my bones."

Ponayeh looked frightened. He understood more English than he spoke, and he didn't like the lady's eyes. The report he made to Muni Andi of Virginia's intentions was hair-raising.

Already to Marjorie, the dinner had lasted a thousand years.

"That venerable monkey that brought me tea—" Virginia was babbling on.

"He is Ponayeh's grandfather," warned Marjorie. Such tongues as Virginia's and Hinsdale's needed muzzling. Hinsdale's, unaided, had surely done harm enough. Not without intention, either. More than ever Marjorie suspected Hinsdale, though she did not know that Sinnia had just reported the wires cut about the cacao nursery, with the watchman absent from his tower, and

that Hinsdale's only order had been, "Wait till morning."

"Didn't guess we lived like this here in the wilds?" he inquired now jocosely.

Marjorie's explanation about the fortunate presence of the visiting cook could not blot out the impression he conveyed that life had been luxurious at Talla Goya.

Turbot, its canned proportions properly disguised, chicken, a native curry, a huge potato carved into a fan-tailed pigeon, cucumbers with scalloped edges, coffee and stewed fruit with cakes and ices, and little wedges of good mince tart! Mr. Riggs could not know how far from the past year's fare was this feast of the gods!

"I should think," murmured Virginia, sympathetically, "you would die here, with nothing to read."

"Nothing? O, that's too harsh for our benightedness," answered the Major. "There's the Home and Colonial series, you know."

"And the book *tamba*. Half the joy of life is bargaining with the book *tamba*," added Marjorie. "He used to have a painful assortment of religious volumes, but he's doing better lately."

"I fear this generation finds religion duller than their mothers did," complained Mrs. Wake-man.

"What makes you fear that?" Marjorie looked

at her with honest surprise. "You ought to see the missionary schools."

"One gets lax, living out of the world." Mrs. Wakeman sighed.

"I've know those who lived in it to sag a bit," the Major answered. "Now, where there's any religion to start with, it comes out in a life like—"

"Miss Ellinwood is very busy converting the heathen village below here," Hinsdale interrupted. "I fear the only effect of her ministrations so far has been to bring a few beggars whining round Talla Goya. But a woman's religion is never hampered by reason." He smiled his indulgent smile.

"My daughter's work in the village," interjected the Major, supplying Mrs. Wakeman with a neatly prepared mango, "has been most—"

"My little doings don't count. They might like to hear about Mr. West, Dad, and the man the other castes half killed for carrying an umbrella."

"That's so." The Major rushed joyously into his favorite's praise. "But West," he ended, "has tact. He fairly weans 'em from their idols. Now, Hinsdale and I—"

"Could you guess who is the 'idol' here at Talla Goya?" Hinsdale's tongue had unusual quickness. He turned to Virginia with a laugh that Marjorie knew was born of the Moormen's brandy. She had bitterly bought knowledge of in-

toxicants. In the look she gave him was comprehending pity where he had expected confusion.

"When we haven't anything else to do here, we worship West," Hinsdale jeered. "Eh, Major?"

"I don't remember any time since West's arrival when we haven't had something else to do," retorted the Major. "For unmerciful—" Upon his words there came a sudden darkness. With the stopping of invisible fans, the air grew hot.

"Something wrong at the power-house. I must go." Hinsdale made his way to the door. Ponayeh brought candles. By their light Zenas Riggs ate slowly and watched faces.

"No more lights to-night. 'Nother chance to say, *I told you so*, to old West." Hinsdale, returning, fell upon his tart.

"What's the matter?" demanded Marjorie.

"Duckweed."

"The filters were all right when Mr. West went away."

"Well, some one's opened them since; the mischief's bad. If these beggars had been taught their place in the beginning, they would know it now. I told West all along he was too easy with 'em."

"How extraordinary!" The Major pushed back his plate. "I thought—"

"I don't expect backing when West's in ques-

tion, Major. But I like proof now and then that I'm right, just to jolly him on."

This appeared to be pure Sanskrit to the newcomers, save that their discomfort was West's fault, and that the Ellinwoods were inclined to excuse him.

On the veranda, the blue dark of Ceylon was not yet lighted by the moon, but Mr. Riggs and the Major smoked, and Hinsdale talked. The evening was not yet over for Marjorie.

"Sing to us, Virgie," said Mrs. Wakeman. "It's so soothing, right after dinner."

"It's so easy to sing after a tropical meal!" Virginia laughed, and went obligingly for her mandolin.

She sang with a certain voluptuous pleasure in her own voice that answered for feeling.

Marjorie listened, and even in the dark dared not relax her guard, lest the spark of a cigar show her to the others.

Hinsdale had seated himself close to her, and brooded on her, torridly near. What was there, he was wondering, about this girl that made the rest of the women flat and spiceless? Love and jealousy for the moment were stronger than hate. She shrank as he leaned toward her, but he did not draw back, and it was she who moved.

"Come, Dad; we jungle people must be up at five." The hour was late enough for release.

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Marjorie was saying good night, safe still in her defenses.

"All right. All right. Quite so." The Major joined her briskly. "But don't give these sybarites the notion that I want you out of bed at that hour, Marjorie. She *will* breakfast with me," he finished confidentially. "That's the worst of sending your girls home to be educated—they lose the habit of obedience, eh, what? Ready—ready, child. Good night, everybody."

The day was over? Marjorie hurried her father's pace under the palms.

CHAPTER XXIV

TWO ENCOUNTERS: ZENAS RIGGS WATCHES

"FORTUNATE to have a man here who knew the place like that," said Mr. Riggs, breaking a smoker's silence after the others had gone.

There was no reply. Virginia, balked of her natural amusement, resented the way in which Hinsdale had held to Mr. Riggs. She had no difficulty in drawing him nearer her chair. Mrs. Wakeman, on the other side, shivered at the thought of bats, yet played duenna meekly. Zenas Riggs yawned first to himself, then without concealment.

"If you folks will just call yourselves at home, I think I'll go to bed," he said. "I'm one of the early risers myself."

But he lingered, finishing his cigar, oblivious of the group. When he opened the screens to enter the house, he met Marjorie coming from the garden side with her arms full of linen for the beds.

"Sagoma is nowhere to be found," she explained quickly, with her finger on her lip. "Sh!"

She had been taken unawares, and the face the old man had seen could not at once replace its mummer's mask.

"You're tired to death," he announced abruptly.

"I'm never tired," Marjorie insisted.

"I'm grateful to you. You're taking a lot of trouble for this company of mine," he said a little fiercely. "You make people too comfortable."

"I only wish it might all have been as—it was planned," answered the girl, regretfully. "How happy, how utterly happy," she thought, they might have been if the old man had come alone.

"Hm," said Zenas Riggs, as if something annoyed him.

She did not know that he followed her as she left the bungalow, watching her safely through the path that avoided the view of the veranda. The moon was up.

At the intersection of the old avenue with the new, she came face to face with a barefooted throng pressing frantically toward her. They were the coolies just come from Barua to occupy the new lines.

"*Pia po*," she commanded. "What's the matter?"

They halted at her order, and the foremost poured out a terrific list of grievances.

Riggs understood neither the talk of the leader nor the girl's replies, but he saw that she was facing

a mob of very angry and terribly frightened men, who might be dangerous.

Something in the way she stood her ground, and in the tone in which she answered, had made an impression. "Ask Supiah," she said in English. "He will tell you we have no devils." Then she translated slowly into Tamil so that all should understand.

"Supiah! Supiah," cried the foremost, "tell me this place accursed by hundred, hundred devils. *Takka*—"

"Our river is perfectly safe from the devils. *Takka* never come near our river. Don't you suppose Mr. West would know—"

"Keep big devil in devil house!" The man dropped back into his own speech. The power-house was evidently the home of the chief river demon of them all. But he had been brought from far countries, and the local devils were angry. They were taking it out pinching and maltreating the coolies. The men had felt many twinges. They would live no longer in haunted lines.

"I speak the truth to you," answered the girl. "There are only good spirits at Talla Goya. I have lived here three years, and I know."

"Devil yourself—have evil eye," shrieked the man. "We go. Give us our keepings and we go."

"You will have no money till you have done more work. If you are afraid in your lines, bring

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the women and children to my father's veranda,
and go sleep with your brothers in the old lines.
The lights——”

She had forgotten. The lights were out.

“*Takka* have killed the devil in your devil house.
Your devil will not make more light.” The man
danced with terror, cowering and advancing as if
the *takka* visibly pursued.

“When the wheels are clean, the light will be
there again. Some one opened the filters and
fouled them.” She spoke quietly, and moved a
little toward the group.

“*Takka*——”

“No, not *takka*, a man. A bad man did it. He
will be punished. *Shurika*. Go.” She moved
steadily on.

The group broke, shrinking back under the
palms. The leader waited where he stood. Mar-
jorie walked slowly, so that her walk was more
stately than her ordinary going. The leader
lingered till she was close, then he too shrank out
of the path.

“Come to the veranda, if you are afraid, and
we will take care of you,” she said again in Tamil,
and paced unhurried past the last of the throng.

The Major was waiting for her under the casua-
rinas. “Why didn't you sing?” he demanded.
“Your voice——”

“Nobody asked me, sir,” she said.

"I wouldn't believe all I heard," suggested the Major, stoutly.

"I don't, Dad," his daughter answered, and kissed his forehead and left him.

The time had come when she must be alone.

And all that night, West was sleeping on the hard bumping floor of a bandy, waking to thank God for the discomfort that brought him nearer her.

CHAPTER XXV.

A GALLANT INTERLUDE

WEST came up the old avenue under the palms. It was eight o'clock. Marjorie would be in the veranda, pruning and watering her flowers, Penny trotting after, the flock of green love-birds flying in and out of the sun. Perhaps Marjorie would be watching, forewarned in some occult way of his early return.

But the old bungalow was deserted. The empty veranda, the quiet living-room, were full of signs of her, but nowhere Marjorie. West's impatience grew with disappointment. Without waiting, he mounted the hill. If only she were at the pergola! His heart beat heavily, the weight of memory and anticipation strong on his pulse. He passed the power-house without a glance.

In the path he met them, Virginia, cool, beautiful, a very vision of the morning; Mrs. Wakeman, stately, rustling, diffusing graciousness as from a platform; Zenas Riggs listening and looking, and

saying little; Hinsdale close to Zenas Riggs; the Major more military than ever—and Marjorie.

His eyes, in spite of the unwelcome shock of the surprise, went instantly to her, but she was answering Mrs. Wakeman, and seemed not to know he had come. To Zenas Riggs, West gave his hand in a grasp that galvanized the old man into a smile. To Virginia and her mother, he offered the same hand with the politest difference.

"I had no idea you were friends of Mr. Riggs," he said with frank astonishment to Mrs. Wakeman.

"We weren't, when you came away." Virginia looked at him; girlish confusion, a seductive mingling of delight and shrinking, balanced themselves in her manner and her words. She even blushed. The blush had been managed in the interval when she turned away as if to hide her emotion at his arrival. Now that she saw him again, and in this heavenly spot, she knew that she wanted him. In the ennui of the past day, when even her baiting of Marjorie had somehow miscarried, she had dreamed voluptuously of what lovemaking under these palms might be.

"We didn't expect you to-day," she added in a lower tone. But West had turned decisively to Marjorie.

"Did you expect me so soon?" he asked. Zenas Riggs was watching him. The gray eyes under the

stiff white brows were less communicative, but they were more intent.

"Not before to-night." Marjorie controlled her voice, but there was a hardness about her that West could not understand. His eagerness fell into a barely concealed preoccupation, but Mrs. Wakeman had both his hands, and in a moved and motherly voice was speaking.

"My dear boy—how good to see you! But what have they been doing to you out here? You're thin!"

"I was always thin; you've forgotten how I looked, my dear Mrs. Wakeman." There was no embarrassment about West's reply. He was conscious of Mrs. Wakeman only as an obstacle to his seeing Marjorie alone.

"It's well we've come to take care of you," insisted Virginia's mother, dropping the hands he was trying to release.

"I never needed care less." West tried again to get Marjorie's glance.

"Are you really well—and happy?" murmured Virginia in a tone others were supposed to believe meant for West only.

"You lilies of the field must go play together. I must find Sagoma. She will waste her morning." Marjorie attempted to escape.

"No—no." Zenas Riggs interfered. "Not to-

day. You can't leave us to-day. West, haven't you any influence?"

"I'm afraid not," flashed West bitterly. The racking alternations of the past forty-eight hours had left him little endurance.

To Marjorie his words were repudiation.

To West it seemed that her manner, less friendly in the presence of Zenas Riggs, was a desertion. Even if Virginia Wakeman had been unpleasantly reminiscent, nothing should have shaken Marjorie's confidence after the morning at the pergola.

At every turn Virginia drew him aside, and, at his answers to her questions, glanced coyly away or assumed an air of tender embarrassment. In his harassed abstraction, he did not at first perceive that he was taken possession of. When he finally detached himself by a kind of sheer brute energy, Virginia had accomplished her end. She had stamped on Marjorie's mind the impression she had meant to produce.

Twice where fast-growing vines had brushed them, she had lost her footing so West must grasp and steady her to prevent a fall. For such easy recklessness of poise, Marjorie, she knew, would think there could be but one explanation. Assurance of welcome, certainty of the present built on some definite understanding in the past. Virginia grew more animated; she was satisfied with her work.

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At a turn of the road, the sight of Burden tenderly unsheathing his sketching kit brought a cry of delighted relief from all but Hinsdale and the Wakemans. Burden waved them away peremptorily. West had to solace himself with a grip and good-bye. It seemed rather mean of old Jimmy.

Marjorie was cold, Jimmy occupied, and something in Zenas Riggs's manner neither friendly nor unfriendly puzzled West. The old man seemed to prefer to talk to Hinsdale.

“‘Where every prospect pleases
And only man is—’”

Marjorie broke in on Virginia's words. “When people begin that quotation in Ceylon, we boil them in oil,” she laughed.

“Should you like to boil me in oil?” Virginia bent on Marjorie a look delicately malicious. “What becomes of the murderers?”

“The government gives them medals for meritorious service to the state. For you—I think I would rather you lived to repent.” Marjorie met the malicious glance, smiling straight into Virginia's eyes.

“Now right here on Talla Goya,” the Major was saying, “a little back from the road to the village, there's a shrine to warm an antiquarian's heart.”

“Then we'll avoid it. Nothing warming, please!” Virginia shook her head at the Major.

"And there might be tigers out after nice American ladies of embonpoint like Mama."

"No tigers. Leopards if you like—plenty of leopards."

"This is the le-o-pard, my child," sparkled Virginia at West.

It was one of West's quotations, one of the thousand memories, thought Marjorie, that he had in common with this girl.

With the aid of a palanquin seat carried on bamboo poles, Mrs. Wakeman traversed with the rest the first miles of the Talla Goya drive. The turbaned coolies in their bright jackets pleased Virginia.

"Make the parrot gentlemen talk," she shouted gaily to Hinsdale.

"What's the song of the palanquin bearers, Miss Ellinwood?" Hinsdale had joined Marjorie, for a brief interval releasing Mr. Riggs.

To stop the dangerous wagging of the Wakeman tongue, Marjorie sang.

The words kept time with the trot of the bare feet on the smooth ground.

"Hoh hé roh!
Where great ones go
Bear we the load.
Hoh hé roh."

At the first note of the chant, Virginia's face

clouded. She had sung to a girl with a voice like this! And this girl had sung to West!

Where a branch of the road curved back to the bungalow, they rested under the trees and ate bright green oranges at which Zenas Riggs squinted doubtfully, till Marjorie laid one on a shining leaf and begged him to attempt it. Something in the spontaneity of her manner suggested that she longed to see him enjoy one of his own good things. He ate obediently and tried another.

"Sing again," he said, still laconic.

Not far away, the wood doves were cooing.

"Hear 'em?" asked the old man. "Singing-time still. You sing."

"The dove song," put in the Major. "*Kurulu-goya*, that's the bird's name, and it gets the note to the life."

"Sing it," repeated Mr. Riggs. He reached for another orange. For a mere breathing moment Marjorie waited. Her eyes held to her father as if she asked rescue from an undreamed ordeal. Then she looked past them all out into the glow of the day. Whatever was required of her, the force within her had risen to meet it. The root where she sat was high, and her gaze went easily above the group lounging about her. With her hands clasped loosely on her knees, as they had been the day she and West had watched the thunder shower,

she sang the first notes, translating the wild thrill
of the bird's melody into a more human passion.

"Kurulu-goya! Kurulu-goya!
The doves are saying, loved one, in the dawn
Kurulu-goya!"

Her voice rang low and wonder-working, in the
Arabian Nights splendor of the sun-smitten wood.

"Beside the stream the deer has fed her fawn;
I only am of all the world forlorn,
I only am alone—and thou art gone—
Kurulu-goya—
Beloved
Thou art gone!
Kurulu-goya! Kurulu-goya!"

How often have we watched the somber skies
Burn into day and blue of my love's eyes,
Kurulu-goya—
How can they sing
And sing
When thou art gone!
Kurulu-goya! Kurulu-goya!"

West's eyes were on the singer. Once only hers
had come back from the blue day to meet them.
Whatever memory lay behind the look, Virginia
saw that with West her battle was all to win.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WEAK MAN BECOMES A VILLAIN

GODDEWANA passed them, in his haste seeing only West. "Cacao being destracted, what is it but?" he intoned mournfully.

Virginia heard with a swift little giggle of appreciation.

Goddewana, in his spotless white garments, regarded her gravely, and bowed to her and to Mrs. Wakeman. "I apologizing interruptions," he explained.

"The nursery!" West had forgotten there were guests. "How much of it's gone?"

"All. Being not one more shall be left." Goddewana almost wept.

"How's that?" West turned to Hinsdale. "Weren't the wires all right? Where was the watchman?"

"When the cat's away dancing in Kandy, the mice will play a little here. I can't be everywhere. You know I was afraid that cacao—" Hinsdale

broke off as though he repressed a deserved reprobation.

For West, disasters seemed multiplying, counter-irritant to greater pain. It was not only the cacao. At every turn from the desolated nursery, where every rupee and every inch of ground expended had cost him long and careful study, all the way to the rice field, there appeared evidence of neglect or waste. The orgy of mismanagement and outrage accomplished in his brief absence, was complete. This horrid slaughter of his young trees was more than the work of wild things. In it there was malignant intention. When the women had left them, avoiding the coming heat, he grew silent, planning in hard strokes a campaign of discovery and punishment.

Where the pale green of the paddy field should have waved, the grain lay flat, dried by the sun, touched with yellowness already. Only a man familiar with the power-house and the pumps could have drained that field so entirely. And the pump was still working in its little shelter, sucking at the exhausted lake of mud.

The wire between the rice field and the power-house was cut. Here West stopped. This was not his dream of showing Zenas Riggs his Talla Goya! But he had not the time to think of that. Before Hinsdale had ceased to exclaim, West was piecing together the destroyed wire with materials pulled

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out of a reserve box beside the pump. Then he called up the power-house, kept the Major, and sent the other two on without him.

"West's young," Hinsdale was saying indulgently as they moved out of ear shot.

"Just what do you want me to understand? Why do you apologize for Mr. West? Suppose you speak plainly." Mr. Riggs adjusted his sun glasses.

"West's an awfully good chap," began Hinsdale deprecatingly.

"There's something brewing, something in the nature of a strike, here? Eh?" Mr. Riggs's tone demanded an answer. "Now what does it mean? Is it poor management? If it's Mr. West's fault, I ought to know it." The old man's eyes blinked behind the colored glass; the colored glass hid the expression of the eyes.

"It isn't West's fault, at all. He was too young and inexperienced for a place of such immense possibilities. It went to his head." Hinsdale had hugged the hope of some legitimate overthrow for West. It had not come. Now he would say his say. "You see he fell into the hands of this fellow Ellinwood—"

"Hm!" interjected Riggs.

"And the daughter—you see she is charming—together they keep his head turned. And the climate is—well a man hasn't the same grip on him—

self out here." Hinsdale spoke with real feeling.
"He needs relaxation."

"How's that?" Something doubting in Riggs's tone pushed the answer farther than Hinsdale had meant to go.

"The native women. They're pretty, you know. I was brought up rather a prig about women. I remonstrated. No use, of course. But there's some sense of injury in the village—Some native lover's revenge, behind this, I fancy."

"How do you know this? Thought you didn't speak their languages."

"I don't remember that I said so. But I've always preferred a reliable interpreter to my own doubtful smattering of a foreign tongue. I don't boast I can speak a language because I can order bread and butter in it." Hinsdale paused.

"Yes—yes. But about West? You say he is lewd with native women."

"No better and no worse than other men."

"We're speaking of one man, your friend West. You wouldn't, of course, say these things without serious reason. Who's your authority?" Mr. Riggs had broken in with a twist of his cane as if he meant to decapitate a blossom, but he dropped the point to the earth thinking better of it."

"Supiah, the Tamil overseer, is one."

Hinsdale answered promptly. A strong exultation filled him. It was plain he had made an im-

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pression. There was anger greater than irritation in the closing furrows of the old man's forehead. West once actually gone, another man could console Marjorie. She was proud, and her pride was already hurt. And Talla Goya had disappointed its owner! He would see West go, quenched in disgrace, the year's work discredited. Old malevolence had grown to greedy malice. Hinsdale was happy.

"I'd like to talk to your Supiah."

A brown man passing looked around as if he had been addressed. He wore the Tamil turban and carried himself with assurance. Hinsdale's smug content, his expression of indulgent regret, grew blank. He excused himself and drew the brown man to one side of the road. It was Supiah, and Hinsdale dismissed him from Talla Goya in West's name.

The man took the rupees Hinsdale handed him, counted them, and turned his back on both men with stiff dignity.

"Supiah," said Hinsdale, returning, "is no longer employed at Talla Goya. But we can send for him if you think it worth while."

CHAPTER XXVII

THRUST AND PARRY: "A DIVINE PLACE FOR A HONEYMOON"

VIRGINIA maintained a pose of passionately joyous dreaming. Mrs. Wakeman used her time faithfully. "So I knew I must relent and make two young hearts happy," she was saying confidentially to Marjorie. Virginia rode in her mother's palanquin.

She knew that Mrs. Wakeman would prattle of the "engagement" hindered by maternal cruelty. She knew that Marjorie would believe West in some way bound. What mother would go to the ends of the earth after a man with whom her daughter had broken once for all!

As they left Marjorie, she still smiled dreamily. "It's so lovely here," she sighed, lifting her eyes to the girl's face. "Wouldn't it be a divine place for a honeymoon?"

"You say too much, Virginia," remonstrated the mother when they were alone and she was back in her palanquin, panting with the unaccustomed walk.

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"Can't you see she's going to throw him over?" Virginia's anger could not rise through her satisfaction. "He'd like to throttle me to-day. Tomorrow he'll come to me, for spite."

"If that's all your hope, we might as well go," Mrs. Wakeman was hot as well as tired, and she fretted sharply. "And I don't see that Mr. Riggs is so devoted to Landon West," she added. "He seems far more taken with that stupid Hinsdale."

"I sometimes think life would be pleasanter if I had no mother," answered Virginia. "Mr. Burden! How dear of you to be here at the very minute when the other men are all talking business!" The girl's tone to Burden was cloyingly sweet.

James Burden, sauntering with pocketed hands, released the flapping sides of a jacket of white linen, and removed a monstrous pith helmet from his head.

"So you're at Talla Goya! I don't think you confided in me your destination when we met at Colombo."

"In Colombo there wasn't time for confidings! And you deserted us for your friends. Where are they, the Buckinghams?"

"Bombay, Thibet, and Timbuctoo, most likely. They're off again. Let me help you." He gave his hand, profoundly deferential, to Mrs. Wakeman as she walked from her seat to the veranda step,

and though she still thought him "crabbed" Mrs. Wakeman smiled, the same smile she had worn for three decades, a smile substantial, always ready and fitted well to wear over any thought meant to be concealed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MAJOR'S DILEMMA

"You think I came to Ceylon engaged to Miss Wakeman, and then told you I was free?" West spoke and waited. "That's what it comes to, isn't it?"

Marjorie stood without moving, where West had overtaken her on the border of the lake. The light was going. Her eyes were on his face, hungry eyes that would not be denied the long desperate look at joy before surrender.

"That's what it comes to." West's words were hard, propelled by the whole force of his revolt.

Still Marjorie did not speak.

"Marjorie, have you forgotten? I never loved Virginia Wakeman."

"You made her think you loved her."

"She refused me."

"Because her mother made her, but you knew she would wait."

"You believe that?"

"What else can I believe?" The cry came straight from torment, and was an appeal. It implored the way to peace, to trust.

To West it was insult incarnate. Through his exhausted body, driven by his will to a terrific day's labor, there burnt the flame of such rage as we feel only toward those who hold our lives in the hollow of their hands. For an instant he looked at her, and while the look crossed her own, turned and was gone.

The Major, climbing restlessly after her, found Marjorie standing in the same place by the lake. The first jackals were lifting raucous cries. The afterglow drowned its violet shadow in the water; a melancholy stream ran in the spillway, answering the wash of lonesome ripples on the wall.

A sharp contraction clutched the Major's flappy throat. "You need your mother, child; you're ill," he said helplessly.

"I'm as well as a mongoose." Marjorie scoffed at him with the spirit that was Marjorie's. Her eyes dazzled him.

When they came into the light of the living-room at home, he looked at her fixedly, seeing the likeness to her mother. "How beautiful the child is!" he said to himself. "And good and brainy as she is beautiful—all heart and unselfishness! She ought to be in the world where she could have her own empire! Little Marjorie!"

"You have been a brave daughter." He laid his hand an instant on her shoulder. "I've never said it, but you lived in hell for two years. There—there—we won't speak of it again, but your old father knows. If you're troubled, you'll tell your father, Marjorie?" The Major stopped in a great agony of effort. He had said what it took years out of him to utter. He looked old as he waited. Smart compunction seized Marjorie. The dangerous quiver that had passed over her face did not return.

She clung to him in a gesture of fine trust, and released him quickly.

"I'm so proud of you," she said. "I'm glad my mother married you!" She smiled and the little dancing devils dragged out of their sad retreat laughed into his pale eyes. "I'm well, father, and I'm happy. But O I'm so dreadfully sleepy! I'm going to tumble straight to bed the minute we finish dinner."

When she left him, the Major was faithfully deceived. But he did not go to bed. It was early, and he had been balked of some talk he had meant to have with Marjorie. What was it? What had he wanted to ask her? About this Wakeman girl. There was nothing in that talk about her being engaged to West. He didn't believe it. The girl was an adventuress. Perhaps West had been careless. But not dishonorable. The Major didn't be-

lieve he cared for the girl; in fact he thought it was Marjorie—If he could have told her this delicately it might have pleased her, but these things were all so damnable hard to say! The shock of his plain speech had already left him unsteady. He needed something to brace him. But he wouldn't touch it. Damn it, no! She had been through enough, poor little girl. He would eat more, instead.

Like a schoolboy stealing from the pantries, he slipped past Marjorie's door. She would want to come out and wait on him if she heard. That he wouldn't have. She was tired. He hoped she was asleep.

"Ringosamy! Sinnia!" he called softly. No one about. They were all running away. Discipline was nowhere. He must see West.

Marjorie heard nothing of his stealthy approach, nor of his return.

The curtain before her door was dropped, but through a break in the bamboo threads he could see her. She was sitting in her low chair beside the table that held her mother's picture and his own. But she looked at neither. Her face seemed no more living than the face of the dead. What strength she had used to cover her suffering from him, he measured by the stillness into which the hard-bought animation had sunk. The face that had been to him but a moment before beautiful

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beyond every other, more girlishly lovely, had gone all at once haggard, wan, hideous with pain! The sight could not have been more dreadful to him if she had lain conscious before him under the knife.

What had done this? Twice he laid his hand on the curtain, to speak to her, and twice drew back as if some fear got hold of him and he did not dare.

CHAPTER XXIX

A DRUNKEN MAN FORCES THE SITUATION AND THE AUDIENCE SIT UP

UP at the new bungalow Burden had excused himself and gone. He wanted to find West. But that he did not say, and no one told him that West was expected by Mr. Riggs.

When West appeared, he had been two hours alone on the mountain. There was a disorder in his look unlike him. Hinsdale perceived it because he was looking for it. Virginia and Mrs. Wakeman saw, and made each her own interpretation.

"Here are the papers," West began a little abruptly. "These cover only what has been sent you, estimate and expenses in a lump, and a journal record. The books are ready for you. I should like to explain more of the scheme on which the thing is being worked out. Could you come down to the camp? Or shall I bring the books up here? You might like to see our shack. The men start in at six, and work till half-past ten. I can be ready then."

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"I want a little talk with you, Mr. West. Why not to-night? I hate to keep things on my mind."

West nodded. He was surprised, but what did it matter!

Mrs. Wakeman and Virginia, the mother a shade more grave from the few words Mr. Riggs had dropped into her ear before dinner, watched the two. Hinsdale was playing cribbage with Mrs. Wakeman and letting a coarsely approving glance rest on Virginia's draperies. She glowed a little under the glance. She had missed her accustomed stimulant of sensation.

"Come out on the veranda. It's cooler." Zenas Riggs rose. "These people don't need us for a few minutes, eh? Mr. Hinsdale can take care of the ladies."

At that moment steps came in a slow, steady march across the veranda; the Major, supernaturally erect, entered the door unannounced. His face was fiery. His eyes blinked. His voice had a thickness. But he bowed perfectly.

"Eve-evenin'," he articulated and bowed again. "Lookin'—lookin' for—you," he ended suddenly, pointing an accusing finger at West.

West had risen and gone nearer the man, his own face whiter even than when he had entered.

"All right, Major," he interposed quickly. "Come down to the bungalow. Marjorie is alone."

"Mar—Mar—jorie!" repeated the Major with

painstaking effort. Then the light of intelligence blazed again in his faded eyes. "West," he shouted, "I thought you loved my daughter."

"I do—love your daughter. Come," said West, and in a silence into which the sounds of the night seemed to intrude loudly mocking, he guided the Major, stooping now and uncertain, from the room, across the veranda, and down the avenue.

"How horribly sad!" deprecated Mrs. Wakenman. "I'm so glad I wasn't alone. I am afraid of drunken men."

"Wasn't it clever of Landon to humor him?" Virginia added to her shocked expression one openly admiring of the absent, turning her eyes first upon Mr. Riggs, then letting them swim an instant on Hinsdale's.

"Very!" responded Hinsdale in a tone that might have implied anything understandable to man. "I'm afraid we're rather used to it all. West made a mistake when he harbored these Ellinwoods."

"Hm!" said Zenas Riggs. "Guess I'll wait for West outside."

But outside, Mr. Riggs sat down where he could watch Virginia, and his gaze was thoughtfully on her when West came up the avenue.

CHAPTER XXX

STRATEGY

"You seem to have a pretty poor assistant in your Major Ellinwood," the old man began.

West had sat down among the caladiums and waited without words. It appeared to him that Zenas Riggs spoke needlessly loud. He was even conscious that the game on the other side of the window had come to a premature end. Virginia Wakeman's chair, that she had moved ostensibly so she could overlook the players, was so close that the flutter of the curtains swept her dress.

"This is the first time in a year," West answered shortly. "Major Ellinwood knew the people, and he knew the soil. He had a fair knowledge of electricity—he was one of the commission that installed—"

"Better discharge him," interrupted Mr. Riggs. "No use for a man who drinks." The owner of Talla Goya was smoking. He held his cigar in his hand while he waited for an answer,

"He's needed here. There's no one in the place who takes the interest that he does." West stiffened a little in his chair.

"A good many things seem to be needed here." Riggs spoke with very evident effort. A premonitory shock shook West's hard composure. Had the day any more for him? There was nothing worse that could happen. That was one certainty.

"Since I reached this place last night to find you away—" Mr. Riggs coughed over his cigar. He was apparently a little shrill and excited with the necessity of saying what was disagreeable.

"I have explained why I was away."

"Yes—yes. Let me finish." Mr. Riggs tossed his cigar into space, and plunged violently on. "Since I got here, from the time when the lights went out at dinner, and it took all night to restore them, till this moment when you've just disposed of a drunken manager—" West moved as if he would speak, but the old man held tenaciously on his way—"there has been evidence of disorganization, mis—er—miscarriage of plans, on every hand. The plans are all very well but I've no desire to take hold myself. The first thing to do, it would appear to me, is to get rid of all untrustworthy and incompetent understrappers. Put in fresh blood." Zenas Riggs had grown more and more emphatic. There was no longer any pretense of talk in the room beyond the window.

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Every word that came through the fluttered curtains deepened a malignant satisfaction in Hinsdale's unmasked gaze. In Virginia's, it accentuated a growing frown; in Mrs. Wakeman's, a blank hanging on her daughter's expression.

"You want me to send away Major Ellinwood?" West spoke after a pause. If all those people were not listening, he might enter into some discussion of the day's demoralization at Talla Goya. Not a word had Riggs said of what he must have seen had been accomplished! There was leaping resentment under the restraint in the younger man's question. "We have a contract with him for two years."

"Compromise. Or pay him the whole, but fire him."

"You insist on this?"

"Yes. The place is mine. My advice ought to count for something."

"Not against the judgment of the man who has worked here fourteen months. You have been here one day."

"I have decided more important things in less time."

"In other words, I am no longer superintendent of Talla Goya."

"That's a way of putting it. Though if you——"

"Either I am in control or I am not. A place

like Talla Goya can't have two heads. When you distrust my judgment, I'd better go."

"Just as you choose." The words came from the old man with fiercer effort. "It might be best."

The silence in the room beyond the windows was absolute as the silence of a death chamber, but it made itself felt louder than noise.

A half dozen words of West's reply were lost. The old man's tone had also dropped. Hinsdale stirred impatiently; he could not hear.

"Say at the end of another month. With of course the remaining salary." The old man's voice was cut short by West's. But West's words, sharp and quick, were still too low for overhearing.

"I'll say good night, Mr. Riggs." The tone of West's farewell had the polish of clean steel.

"I'll see you in the morning." There was a sort of painful appeal in the shout the old man sent after West; but West was already well distant, and made no reply.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE THINNESS OF BUNGALOW WALLS

HINSDALE concealed the delight in his face by retreat. When Zenas Riggs reentered the house, Mrs. Wakeman was reading, and Virginia yawning.

"You really should not talk business so near open windows. We simply couldn't help hearing," began Virginia. She felt angry with this old man, but it was not wise to show it. Unresponsive old fossil! He had misled her, brought her out of her way for nothing, and the journey had been expensive.

"No special use in making the business private," answered her host crassly.

"I'm afraid you're angry with Landon West." Mrs. Wakeman dropped her book, and Virginia frowned her into silence.

"He expects to leave Talla Goya—at the end of the month. He's resigned." Mr. Riggs still spoke with effort, pulling, savage and disturbed, at his knobby chin.

"You are disappointed in Mr. West. So am I. Virginia dear, I will speak. It would be wrong to deceive Mr. Riggs. You know absence make such changes. I shall not permit Virginia—" Mrs. Wakeman hesitated.

"You have been very kind." Virginia turned to them a clouded face that had all the look of tears about the troubled eyes. "I shall never forget—"

Mr. Riggs filled the pause only with a steady gaze of waiting.

Virginia played with her handkerchief. "Old imbecile!" she was saying to herself. "If you had not invited us to Talla Goya," she went on aloud, "I should never have found out how little—that I had made a mistake."

The look of waiting in Zenas Riggs's face became a tense gravity.

"Things and people seem so different in different surroundings! I can't go on with Mr. West—it—I must seem very fickle to you."

"Not at all," interjected the old man in an approving staccato. "You do quite right."

"My mother thinks—" Virginia shot a glance of command at Mrs. Wakeman, "that we've intruded on your paradise long enough."

"The letters to-day"—Mrs. Wakeman drew one from the book she held; it was a forwarded bill from a dressmaker on the edge of bankruptcy—

"say friends of ours reach Colombo on the next steamer. To be there in time to meet them——"

"For the P. and O. you'd have to get away early in the morning." Zenas Riggs appeared to waver as to further speech. "How about it?—Not much time to pack your furbelows—suppose you'd better wait for another——"

"We simply must start. We never could explain to the Bartletts. We really promised to meet them, mother.—Could you send the chocolate lady to us, the sienna-colored belle they call Sagoma? Then we could pack now." Virginia got gracefully to her feet, smiling at Zenas Riggs.

"I'll try." Mr. Riggs had been looking old, but he walked briskly to the bell.

In her room Virginia turned on her mother, already shrinking from the expected words. "What you dragged me into this snake's hole for I can't imagine, unless you want to marry that old ape downstairs." She spoke almost in a whisper, but bungalow walls, even improved and refrigerated bungalow walls, are not solid enough for safety. The "old ape" heard. As he waited for the ayah, he squinted his small gray eyes curiously.

No Sagoma answered the bell. No one was to be found in or about the bungalow.

"Empty as a graveyard!" muttered Mr. Riggs, and set forth in the blue dark. He walked quickly as if he knew what he was going to do.

In the midst of her unaided packing, Virginia unrolled the Ceylon Observer to make paper crumples for her sleeves. It was the latest number, and her eyes fixed themselves in a stare upon one paragraph.

"Mother!" Mrs. Wakeman came to attention with a nervous start.

"Jared Burroughs was married in Colombo by the Bishop last week to a girl he met coming out." The daughter intoned the words so each one should take effect.

Mr. Burroughs had permission to follow, but after a longer interval. Virginia had intended to meet him with the announcement of her engagement, to West, or to himself.

CHAPTER XXXII

DECISION AND NO DALLYING

WHEN West was out of sight of the bungalow over whose construction he had spent months of enthusiastic ingenuity, he walked steadily, neither hurrying nor lingering, to the camp. After the first stunned realization of what had happened, there rose the swelling sense of power that is the reaction from the numbness of a blow. He was strung by the very force of it to immense, splendid resistance. The first moments of catastrophe are not the hardest; they have in them exhilaration of living to match the strength of disaster.

But as he put together his clothes and books—each thing he touched, the record of Talla Goya work—he reviewed his decision. He had said to himself that he would go at once. West was too level-headed to be long dominated by impulse that did not reason. He saw the whole figure of defeat. The thing had come too suddenly for him to choose his words at the moment, but, even if

he had been prepared, should he have conciliated, explained, asked for time, accepted in the end the old man's delay?

"No," he decided again, hotly determined. If the man based a final judgment on one day's evidence of ill will, if he could not understand in some fashion what work the present Talla Goya stood for, if he was poisoned so easily by superstitious hostility working in the dark, he must digest his own poison. Argument and proof would leave him still suspicious, unjust.

Who was this enemy? The cut wires, the destroyed nursery, might be the work of emissaries of the *widerale*, but the other things, the filters, the pumps, the trouble that meant a knowledge of machines no native would dare to touch, for these he could not account. His faith in Goddewana did not waver. As for Hinsdale, it would have been treason to West to believe that any man with Hinsdale's training could be a scoundrel.

The attitude of the men, frightened, angry,—the whole situation was unprecedented, queer! A little removed from the lines of communication with other estates, Talla Goya should nevertheless have repeated their undisturbed serenity. Only gross and atrocious malice working on ignorant terrors could have roused the coolies to overt acts of hostility. Given another day, and he would have unearthed its cause.

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He was sorry to leave Ceylon. The planters were loyal, neighborly, friendly people. They would have been good to know. He was sorry to leave Talla Goya—his life had grown into the thing. Life had really begun for him at Talla Goya.

He finished his packing, and sat down by his table. The thought he would not utter, even to himself, looked up at him from its blotted surface. *He was leaving Marjorie.*

She thought that it was Hinsdale—but that had been the Major's idea. Poor Major! It had been a mistake to bring Hinsdale. And a worse mistake to keep him. What had possessed the man! Even Hinsdale had never had a jar like this. It was the first taste of failure West had ever—Except Marjorie. If ambition was his passion, Marjorie was life itself. To leave Marjorie!

He stared at the wall and saw only his own desolation. It was the look the Major had confronted in Marjorie's face when she had thought herself alone.

Burden, communing with himself in an odd fever of restlessness, came in from pacing the old avenue like a ghost perturbed, to find West's trunk locked, strapped, and addressed, against the wall, a tightly stuffed gladstone on top, and on that a mere word of good-bye.

"Dear Jim, I'm off. Now and at once. Riggs will explain. Tell him to go to hell with his salary."

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I'll take what I've earned. Where you're keeping yourself, I don't know. Perhaps you too have a complaint against L. W. Bring it on. One more won't matter. Will you see that Miss Ellinwood gets the enclosed? Look out for the Major. He's in my bed. *See she isn't alarmed.* Ravvy."

CHAPTER XXXIII

“THE WORST OF IT”

MARJORIE had not sat long in the attitude of a dead endurance. Life burned in her too actively for that. Burden found her standing on the veranda. His errand done, he went hurriedly toward the new bungalow, taking the nearest way, and missing Zenas Riggs tramping down the avenue.

West's note to Marjorie was hardly a dozen words. It lay open in her hands, as the old man mounted the veranda steps and looked in at her. At the first glimpse of her face, he threw off the quiet of his manner, and struck the door frame smartly.

“Come in.”

“Is West here?”

“Mr. West is gone.” If she had cried *dead*, the word could hardly have produced more effect.

“Gone! To-night?” There was excitement in the old man's repetition.

“Why not? You sent him.” Marjorie came

nearer her visitor. "You are more stupid than a savage." She stood taller by the height of her anger. "No man ever worked for another as Mr. West has worked for you! Have you no eyes? Couldn't you see what he's done here? Do you know what this place was like a year ago? Untouched jungle, swamp, an old cocoa grove worse than a jungle? Any man but Landon West would have let the palms go. He saved them for you. What do you know of what it cost him?—"

Zenas Riggs, his gray eyes sharply on the girl's face, said nothing.

"What do you know about Talla Goya—after one day? He has given his life and soul to it for hundreds of days." She came still nearer. "While you were asleep he was working—Out always with his men at dawn, sitting up half the nights to study strange languages—for you—Learning and learning, a dozen arts, a hundred trades, to make Talla Goya beautiful—for you!" She stopped for a hard-taken breath, her eyes not wavering, their passion deepening.

"How much do you know? How much has he written you of the nights he fought the fire set by the dry bamboo—when he slept only in minute snatches in the open, and ate only when some one forced food into his hand—never coming back to shelter for a week, till every spark and thought of a spark was found and killed in the woods?

What do you know of the planning—the planning that has made Talla Goya one of the loveliest places in the world? The man who's been working, working, never forgetting, never rushing into anything without a plan, never letting go what he had begun, never losing the million other threads because one more had to be woven in,—the man who's given you his hands and his brain and his whole loyal—O you come here—cool and clean and comfortable, and you never ask what sweat and strain and long hard labor it has cost! You never say a word to tell him that you know what he has done, what he has conquered here for you! When floods and fires and drought and pests have been worst, even then he has conquered. Now——”

“ He seems to have the worst of it—now.”

“ It isn't he—it's you that have the worst of it!” she cried. “ Where in all the world will you find another to serve you like Landon West—too noble to distrust the mean, too busy to take pleasures others thought a right—Stung and torn and sick with fever, and half dead with weariness, always, ‘ He'll like this ’ or ‘ If I were only sure which he would like ’—counting on your coming, happy every day to think of what he'd show you—And you send him away! At the first lying slander you listen, and send him away! The ‘ worst of it ’! He'll succeed anywhere. But you'll never find another Landon West.” Her voice had dropped into

such depths as great waterfalls take in their descent. Strong in the flood of her rare outburst, she gave the words a ring Homeric in accusing cadence. When she broke off, the air seemed to carry still, in its myriad invisible wires, the ringing of her furious charge.

"And how about you?" Zenas Riggs, roused to a retort, sent it back hot and hard and straight. "How about you, young woman? When he needed you most, did you stand by him?"

The flame died in Marjorie's eyes. A kind of horror grew in them. Before Zenas Riggs knew what had happened, she was past him and out in the night.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A GHOST-HAUNTED NIGHT

BURDEN began to feel like a figure "enchanted in a nightmare". At the camp, no West; at the new bungalow, no Zenas Riggs; and now at the old bungalow, no Marjorie! He looked in from the veranda at the room most endeared to the dwellers in Talla Goya, and there seemed something portentous about its emptiness. Even Godde-wana had vanished into air!

The absence of the house boys was significant. But significant of what? The evening was full of queer oppression, for which nothing that he knew wholly accounted. Perplexed and curious, he made his way under the trees to the lines, and even there things seemed uncommonly empty. In the Tamil quarters, the new huts stood deserted; along the old lines, the women talked where usually the men lounged and chewed their betel. In the quarters of the Singhalese, there was a waiting stir, men in close conference, women peering from the doors,

expectant. The great lights reflected in the glistening yams, the shadows of the unstirred trees, seemed part of a weird phantasmagoria. To Burden prowling in a world from which West had gone, nothing appealed as picturesque; it was all sordid and distasteful, these dark huts and their dark-minded dwellers.

As he turned to make his way back to the camp, beating the leaves before him for possible snakes, a slender figure strange to him blocked the way under the trees. The figure spoke, not hastily but anxiously, Burden thought. Then groaned as it perceived he did not comprehend, a smothered sound, unmistakable signal of distress.

It was West the apparition wanted. West would have understood the Singhalese. Where was the one man who could have brought them back into the everyday world of action, and broken the spell of this ghost-haunted night? Where was West?

CHAPTER XXXV

THE SHRINE, THE MOON, AND MARJORIE

To West the village road he traveled seemed given over to foul things that crept or flew. The odor of the earth rose with the smell of quick decay. Something indecent there was about this rank growth matched with unspeakable death! In the dank hollows his feet strayed into the ooze, and the sucking sound of their withdrawal brought to his nostrils the stench of sick putridity. Little by little, as the dark became clear, the shapes of things stood over him grotesque and hateful, monstrosities of a monstrous land!

Little by little too, as the height of his anger passed, the cold dawn of common sense showed him the way he must go, facing the harm a word from Riggs might do at home, facing the hateful shadow of a task unfinished, and the fight to cure the rankle of injustice that, left unhealed, ruins a man for work.

Yet the sharpness of the injustice he had suf-

fered, the corroding wrath that he had been beaten by the machinations of the Lanka people or by the stupidity of Hinsdale, and so by his own fault, revolved their every facet in his mind without seeming more than pictures. For them he was the onlooker. A dull pain of disaster, the nightmare sense that one must wake from this oppression, even while one knows there is no waking, served only as a background for the real trouble of the night.

He walked fast. To move slowly was beyond the power of his tingling flesh. To leave Talla Goya for another to complete! Now that it was where every stroke would tell, every hour bring out the effects for which he had long prepared the way!

Even Burden had forsaken him! Jimmy—it seemed impossible. But everything was possible after Marjorie—His arms were still quick with the clasp she had given him at the pergola. Who was this girl, if that other had been Marjorie? Had he never known her? What a comrade she had been! He saw her again as she had looked back at him on a day when they had been drowned in rain and torn by thorns, and, wet, muddy, ragged from their climb, had come out upon a lofty ledge, and seen the whole island below them, Serendib the Splendid! In all the discomfort she had revelled, the light of conquest so joyous in her face that he had forgotten to turn his eyes to the view, till she had reminded him.

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How every day of the past year, he had found her busied with some plan for Talla Goya, pleased when he had called it feasible! Loyal! He would have sworn she was made of loyalty, incapable of change. That once won, she was his—Had he played the coward there? Was she his, in spite of her own—But there was no comfort in the thought. What if he had told the truth about those two women who had followed a rich man into his paradise, how could a girl like Marjorie comprehend? How could she measure the cheapness of those half caresses with which Virginia had tried to buy him back!

Marjorie! In the thought of her, all memory of impurity and deceit and meanness burned up and was gone, not in blue flame of virtue without body, but in scarlet glow born on earth and mounting heavenward!

The imagery of the Orient was in his ears. She was his lotos bloom, white in the murk of shadowed mire, his floating lily face to the sun, ignorant of the foulness whence we mortals climb.

More than ever he realized that they had fought the fight together; that without her he could not have performed the miracles he had performed. What else but the power of a feeling which is life and the renewal of life, had given him the three-fold impetus that had made possible the strain of the fourteen months of unnatural labor.

Virginia Wakeman! What was she to come between him and a woman like Marjorie! Yet, against her coarse methods, he had been futile, spinning useless like a ship's propeller in the air.

For the first time in all the exhausting days in an exhausting climate, he felt the dreary lassitude of the heat, vitality low in him. He was beastly tired, he told himself, but he would not die in Ceylon! And, in the thought, he felt like a traitor to the land that had rewarded his work with the lavishness of a mother, the land Marjorie loved.

Marjorie—Marjorie—Marjorie! Without her—Weakness descended on him and he stopped, his hands clenched, his lips hard on each other, his head raised. In his eyes, hot with anger at his dismissal, came the cauterizing pain of tears. Blind with them, he groped from the grassy road and followed the wrong path. Not till he stumbled upon the old shrine, and heard the hiss of a frightened snake, did he realize where he was.

And while he waited to get his bearings in the dark, wishing for the moon, resolution roused itself. He would not fall so easily victim of Virginia's hand and spear. He would see Marjorie again.

At the thought, a shiver went keen as a chill wind through his body. Had he known her after all so little? How could he find his way within the defenses to which she had withdrawn? What

man before ever fell from such a heaven to such outer darkness of forsaken hell!

Something was stirring in the dark close at hand, breathing with soft violence, some creature spent with running. West moved to give it room. The moving stopped. For a second's pause there was no sound but the stir of growing things in the warm wood. Then from high trees, where they danced in a myriad green flames, a swarm of fireflies swept in some aerial game between him and the creature breathing close at hand.

West had no instant for comprehension. With a cry like a mother's over a hurt child, Marjorie was close to him, her grasp on his arms, her low voice poured out in fiery indignation.

To the man whose memories knew nothing of home, whose hard knocks had found him solitary, the sound of that consoling rage in his behalf, that fervor of faith and championship, was the sound of a new-discovered heaven. It came upon him too suddenly, it took him up in too dizzy a flight from the depth of his desolation! The breath he drew was like the sigh of children after bad dreams. The dark that had till now been noisome, grew sweet with healing.

"I wanted to see you," she was saying. "I wanted to tell you——"

"What?" West waited, hoping all things.

"You haven't lost this splendid year. It's yours.

Spite can't take it from you. Nor any blind old man. It will all go into your work, into greater work." She still held to his arms. She was spent with her haste.

" You will be great. Because you are more than any profession. You have it all. The knowledge and the power to do, and the desire. You aren't tied and bound in one little selfish channel. You are master of yourself. They say science and business kill poetry and kindness." She caught her breath and went quickly on. " But what are these great plans for making people more comfortable, more free from drudgery and grime and—O, what is it all, but poetry? I'm not clear in my words, but I've always felt it, always known it—Every bit of earth reclaimed, not torn off and spoiled, used right and honorably, and given its chance—that is poetry. It is you who can do these things. —No, not yet—Let me say it first, before you deny it—What is this one injustice but something to send you out to do for whole countries what you have done for Talla Goya." On the word her voice failed.

West saw now that she held to him as much for support as in kindness.

" You haven't lost this year," she repeated.

" What do I care—if I have lost you!" The cry burst from him, miserable, uncontrollable. Her faith, her encouragement, but no sign of love!

Her grasp on his arm was tightening. She held to him dizzy with effort; the moon sailing clear of the trees showed to her the gods of the shrine moving among their green draperies of vines. Fear, grown strong in the distance to which she had thrust him out, was fastened to West. She resented injustice to the engineer. Did she still doubt the man's honor?

"You were—good to come," he began.

"Good!" She caught herself on the verge of more. "You must not be blind. It is not superstition, or the other electrical people, that have accomplished all these things, and poisoned Mr. Riggs —It is Mr. Hinsdale."

"I don't believe it. I can't." West spoke with edged sharpness. Revulsion followed on the shock of his delight. She was avoiding the mere mention of love.

"You said that once before, when I dared to hint—And it hurt. I seemed a backbiter to you. But there is no pride in what I have done to-night. You cannot hurt me." She spoke with cold sorrow. "You have been treacherously used. And you are blind."

The hand that held to him slipped. She stood alone, her feet unsteady on the moonstone of the shrine where the elephants marched, making their sunwise turn about the lotos.

"Blind," he cried. "I may be blind, but you—you see so clearly that you stopped loving me."

"I never stopped loving you." The words, like all such words from her, came as if torn from live flesh. "I didn't understand—"

She was erect now, no longer swaying, as if the strength of her feeling gave her new energy to stand upright.

"I never was bound to Virginia Wakeman. In honor or any other way.—Do you believe me?"

"Yes—yes." She whispered the words tense and fervent, but she moved backward as he came swiftly nearer. The resolute force that had kept him from touching her was in the retreat.

"Do you truly care for me, or do you feel as you did—about her? Are you sure you love me?"

"Love you! I have been in hell for you!"

For the first time she saw his face clearly in the shining of the moon.

"In hell'! What do you know about it!" She shuddered, her hands a little lifted, to drop again to her sides. "In one hour more jealousy would have killed me."

With all his strength given back to him, life beating furiously in his veins, he drew her into an inexorable grasp, worshiping, demanding.

"Say that again," he cried. "Say you were jealous."

"I could have killed her!" she said fiercely, so

low he bent to hear the words. "Every look you ever gave her, every time you ever spoke to her or heard her sing or—saw how beautifully she dresses——"

West's arms clamped on her in a spasm of adoring tenderness.

"You precious baby"—His own voice was half a sob—"You, jealous of her clothes!—of that——"

She laid her hand on his lips. "You needn't call her names for me!" She caught her breath again, this time in a little laugh more heavenly than songs. "Only say you don't love her, seeing her again, so bright, so beautiful——"

"O Marjorie—my Marjorie," cried West, "don't you know nothing is so dead as a dead love?"

"And nothing, they say, so sweet as a revived one."

"But the kind I had for her was not made to revive. Any other girl I'd happened to meet—I'd no idea what love was. I could have mistaken any little attraction for it. Some men know. They grow up with it. But they have homes. My mother died when I was born, a 'two-months widow'. I remember hearing my uncle tell about it in just those words. All my ideals went to work. I meant to make them, their name, known. That's been most of my religion. It was a kind of superstition with me for a long time. I liked to believe the life that they never had they were living out

in me. But I'm inclined to think they're living their own—”

“But they know—They are glad. I am sure my mother—if you had seen her, you would not blame my father. To have her, and then to lose her—”

“I can guess—” West clasped closer yet the figure in his arms.

The passion of the night was warm and sweet about them. The glory and the beauty of it hurt like the great moments in great music, coming too close to those well-hidden nerves of joy that vibrate only to show we are immortal, foretaste of a heaven we may only dream. Every live thing that flew or crept or ran or walked among the mysteries of the blessed wood seemed now to West a fellow being, whose existence gave delight.

“Rest a little, before we start.” West brushed clear an empty niche in the ancient stone, and threw his coat upon it, remembering the step of the red-brown pergola.

He put himself at her feet, and together they looked up at the blue night and the sailing moon, as they had looked out at the morning and the sun.

In the tropic heat, the wood seemed to grow audibly, the young leaves rustling from their sheaths.

“She said you were hurt—her mother said so—

when she didn't wear your flowers," murmured Marjorie.

"What rot!" said West. "To tell the truth I generally gave her candy, marrons glacés, because she liked candy better. This place must bore her stiff. Nature was her horror. Dearest—I can't even remember any one else exists! Aren't you going to kiss me? Children always kiss when they make up." He plaited a fold of her dress carefully, and kept his hand on it in a close caress as he laid it down on the dark stone.

"I shall—probably—kiss you to death—before long—" She laughed as children do—"but just now I must say something. Ought you not to go back? That poor crazy old man—"

"There's no dignity in sneaking back now." West repeated aloud his argument with himself. "How did you know I'd lost my way?"

"I'd been following, but I couldn't catch up. And after you left the road I began to fear it wasn't you."

Shut in by the trees, the little space of the shrine made a refuge it was hard to leave. The shadows of the waving creepers fell on them, and moved away as the breeze woke fitfully. Upon his stone couch, the Buddha slept as he had slept his thousand years? Beside him, the lovers leaned and talked, or were silent in a great content.

"I think God never made so sweet a thing—as

you. No wonder he went back to paradise to do it." West reached up to grasp her hand.

"I was born in Bombay, which is not altogether an Eden," she said, the little mischievous devils again in her eyes. "Do you want me to kiss you—now?" she asked.

West turned kneeling, his arms about her, his face white in the moon's glow.

It was long before she spoke again.

"Your idea of a kiss—is not—like anything—I ever knew by that name before." She was on her feet, unsteady, the thrill of her voice denying the lightness of her words.

"I am glad of that." West looked at her, speechless with the wonder of her against that background of ancient shrine and moonlighted fern and palm. "Ah—dearest. Marjorie!" He held out his arms to her and she came to them. Her slender hands upon his hair, she drew him down and on his lips put a solemn little kiss, all trust, all faith, and infinite in sweet companionship.

"That is my kiss," she said, her hand in his. "And both are good. Come. We must go."

CHAPTER XXXVI

LIGHT ON HIDDEN PLACES

LONG after West had turned for the last time and was far down the avenue of palms, she stood at the door of the old bungalow, her hands clasped, watching alone.

West, looking back even after he could see neither house nor sentinel casuarinas, felt the bitterness of a double death. If he stopped now, at once he could be with her, hear her voice. If he went on, he must wake where he should not see her, and live "laborious days"—how long—before they met!

When avenue and sound of the river and Talla Goya itself, with the silvery arecas shimmering under the moon, were all behind, the joy of life mingled with the pain and sharpened it to greater hurt. To love her, and to leave her to her solitary watch!

Under the casuarinas a deep shadow was also watching. Anitchi, the *appu's* daughter, stood

without moving, gazing toward the veranda. Her father, Supiah, had gone on some dark business to join the village men. Anitchi watched over Marjorie. She loved the lady of Talla Goya. Moon-on-the-river was the Tamil name for the Major's daughter.

The *sinne dorei* loved West! That was a new thought. Till now Anitchi had felt it no harm to set the *appu* to suspecting West. It had kept him from noticing Hinsdale. And Hinsdale had filled her mind with the shade of his own hate, though her little English was their only means of communication. But it was, after all, West who had saved her little brother, giving Supiah permission to take him to the hills. To watching Anitchi life grew all at once complex and troublesome.

The girl on the veranda waited till even the shadow of the palms could no longer cheat her into thinking some one moved far off upon the road.

The familiar objects about poured upon her the grief of remembered joy.

“Marjorie! And at this hour!”

Hinsdale was there. His very use of the name that West had spoken but a moment since, was to her flagrant in offense. She would have opened the door swiftly, but he was also swift. The Moormen’s brandy, his exultation at West’s going, had worked together to give him a greedy courage.

“Don’t go,” he said, “I want to talk to you.”

While she cast about her for escape, his words came fast, and his outpouring changed from bold assertion to fervent pleading. "*You will come to me*" dropping to "*I love you, girl, I love you.*" Reality sounded loud through the man's fierce assurance.

Marjorie stood waiting, still silent. To answer him seemed to open a gate by which the defilement of his presence could soil the sacredness of the past hour.

"Father!" Her cry filled the night. Hinsdale was pursuing her.

"Marjorie!" The answer came from the camp path. The Major, restored by the ministrations of Burden, was on his way home.

Anitchi, her hands clutched close in the folds of a new jacket meant for Hinsdale's further subjection, saw the Major first. She drew deeper into the shade, her bare feet noiseless on the yielding earth. When Hinsdale took the avenue way, she followed him. Under the palms, breathless with anger and running, Anitchi blocked his road.

Hinsdale halted, looked down at her, his violence finding its natural outlet. When she would have laid a shapely hand on his sleeve, he threw her aside, and she fell on the gravel, physical shock adding to the pain at her heart.

"The evil eye!" she moaned. "He has it. It was that betrayed my heart! The evil eye! Siva

save—save! The spell is on me! I am lost. I am bewitched. The evil eye! The evil eye!"

Forehead to the ground, she groveled, working herself into a frenzy easily born of jealousy and grief. Then, rising, she ran, still crying on her gods, toward the village and the *widerale*.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DEVIL DANCE BEGINS

WEST was walking against the force that drew him back to Talla Goya. Insensibly it slackened his speed. He was longer in traveling the miles than he knew. Just outside the village, Goddewana met him.

"You, sir—good meetings!" Goddewana came to a panting halt. The faithful man seemed always the warning of disaster. What was in the wind?

Goddewana explained in Singhalese, fluent and dignified as he was hesitating and quaint in English. The new coolies had been frightened from their lines. The frantic exodus had taken the nearest way to the devil doctor. The devil dance was already in full swing. Two sick children were the subject of the exorcism. But that was not all. Other Talla Goyans were involved. There were loud murmurs of the devil in the power-house. Goddewana believed the night meant an attack on the machines.

"Mr. Hinsdale telling Supiah river devils angry at devil in power-house. He making them working why not?"

The repeated note about Hinsdale began to strike home. West felt a cold sickness in his bones. Facing physical disaster for one's self is nothing to facing moral disaster in a man you have trusted, a man of your own profession.

The noise of tom-toms furiously beaten filled the air. The hideous clamor of the temple chanks bruised the quiet of the night. The monkeys answered the shouts of the villagers. Dark shadows sliding through the wood added to the throng under the sacred tree. More of the Talla Goya coolies joining the revels!

West felt sure that Goddewana's fears were exaggerated, but he respected the man's good sense; some cause of alarm there must be. He could not go till he knew what was to be the outcome of the night's excitement.

"Someone shooting cobra living by temple—cobra of Soypura Paliyama." Goddewana spoke impressively. The priest's pet murdered! The sacred snake! That was the gravest element in the situation. Sacrilege might embolden even the quiet Ceylonese to resentful deeds.

The brown man led the way in the deepest shade under the trees, and waited with West under a huge banian in whose aisles they were easily con-

cealed. Under the consecrated tree behind the temple, the throng yelled and the devil dancers danced. Cocoa lamps and plaited palm torches gave the light. The stench of bad oil came on the slow wind.

The Siamese fanatic who had been stirred up by Raend and Galbers broke in now and again with fierce exhortings. Save for the sacred thread, he stood almost naked in the flare. In a lull of the incantations, the Buddhist priest spoke from a little elevation. The history he recounted gave to West a thrill of amazement. Had the power, that beneficent means to human joy, been deliberately used to terrify and injure the men of Talla Goya? Who had given shocks to the unsuspecting, inflicted suffering on the disobedient, alarmed the timid!

“Mr. Hinsdale—he doing the things as priest saying them,” whispered Goddewana.

There must be some reality in the heart of all this exaggeration.

West again felt sick. The cobra, drawn from beneath the priest’s robe at the end of the appeal, was worse than real. Its diamond-marked length swayed limp and heavy in the priest’s hands, the bloody head dangling. Groans from the whole throng prostrate before the dead serpent! West saw now, what he had been told before, how cleverly the old snake worship had been incorporated in the Buddhism of the Island.

Quickly as he had produced it, the priest disappeared with the body of the snake, and the devil dancers whirled again into the bright light. The pounding of the tom-toms, the indescribable uproar of the chanks, began again, and as the measure of the dance grew more frenzied, the long red and white fringe flapped upon the false hips of the dancers standing out straighter and straighter in the demoniac leaps. The fans erect above their brows bowed and wavered with the fury of their accelerated spinning. The tom-toms increased the time. Led by the devil doctor, the multitude flung their bodies on the ground.

“ O Brahma, Siva, Vishnu,
O Walaia, come!
Come Hanimantu ! ”

The shriek wailed to the skies, noise acting on terror, and terror increasing the noise; the striped figures of the dancers grew more fiendish in motion.

“ *Saadu! Saadu!* ” screamed the mob.

Into the midst of this motley, her hair unbound, her body daubed with the saffron of the possessed, Anitchi sprang.

“ *Tanicania!* ” shrieked the crowd. “ Possessed woman. She has a devil! ” Hindoo and Buddhist surged toward the girl. Raising her hands high, silent as if the torture she endured bound her

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tongue, she whirled till her half-crazed glance had glittered on every side of the throng, then with her arms still flung out before her, she turned and rushed toward the Talla Goya road. The horde followed howling.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

AT THE POWER-HOUSE: ZENAS RIGGS CAN FIGHT

WEST and Goddewana by a swift detour struck the highway first. To leave the road meant to be too late. They must run, risking the presence of weapons in the throng. Some native hunter might be armed. But no shot followed them, only the shouts and the noiseless running.

"Go, Goddewana," gasped West. No white man could hope to keep up with Goddewana. If only he had put in the defensive wires! Even as he ran, the words of the priest kept recurring. Who had dared dismiss Supiah? From whom would the man take a dismissal? From Hinsdale.

The howl of discovery had set the insane mob in a faster plunge after the fleeing two.

What might not be already happening at Talla Goya! Fear for Marjorie thrust West forward upon Goddewana's track in a deadly haste.

"Burn devil house!"

"Making burning devil house!"

The runners, used to keeping side by side with galloping horses, sprang in gliding leaps to the time of the beaten drums.

Then West stumbled. The foremost devil dancer plunged upon him; the next to follow twisted his arm with a jerk so that when he rose and flung the two backward, the left arm hung limp and swung. He steadied it with his right hand as he ran. Only two miles more! But his breath was failing!

At a turn in the way, where for a single instant he was out of sight of his pursuers, he broke a branch on the nearest side of the path and flung himself to the ground, crawling into the opposite shadow. The mob, pushed by the frantic ones in the rear, could not halt. Only one or two fell off to peer into the bushes by the broken branch. There were devils also in the wood; they did not wait.

West, fallen into the slime of the ditch, let its remaining moisture cool the bursting agony of his body. But before the howling had circled the next bend, he was following. As they skimmed through the shadows of the silvery arecas, he was mingling his howls with theirs, unnoticed in the straining passion of the rear guard.

Marjorie! What was happening to Marjorie!

On Talla Goya land, where every inch of the way was known to him, he slipped into the grove be-

tween the old bungalow and the new. The throng was behind him. Then on a looped root he stumbled again, fell, and lost time in unconsciousness.

When he woke to life, loud above the rush of the river came the sound of battle.

The dangling arm swung on a point of hideous pain. Sweat and blood ran upon West's face; his eyes were blind with insects that bit viciously and swam in his path; the ground seemed to move with him as he climbed. Gasping he still mounted.

Before him the yelling increased. Choking with hot pain in his strained lungs, he broke from the wood in sight of the power-house.

The whole effort of the mob had been to fire the shelter. They dare not cross the threshold. The flailing blows of Burden's long arms were sending them reeling backward. Light streamed from the wide doors. In it Zenas Riggs battled like an old tiger. Around his head his hair stood out in a rumpled halo. With his doubled fists he struck faster than the brown men could bear him back. But the odds were impossible.

With a yell of sheer rage at the sight of the attack on his machines, West plunged upon the mob. With his own arm he beat out the flames licking at the eaves.

Where was Goddewana?

The thrumming of the dynamos and the plashing of the water wheel went on steadily under the roar.

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The struggle into which West had flung himself one-armed, seemed more noisy for the beauty of the night.

He saw streams spilling on the ground from the slashed and useless hose he strove to reach. Fire was leaping again against the wall. He struggled toward it; Supiah's blow, the crash of a club squarely on his head, sent him down.

Riggs was being pressed back, the timid behind pushing the van into the haunted power-house. Burden's arms could not beat off a mob. Danger lay among the purring dynamos! West gone and Hinsdale gone—Goddewana only left to protect machines and men from each other!

Where was Goddewana?

The stripes of the foremost devil dancers glistened in the power-house door.

“Talla Goya! Talla Goya!” The yell came from the grove, and another mob reinforced the first.

“Hell! We’re done for!” shouted Burden to Riggs. But this mob was led by Goddewana and the Major.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WINNING OUT

OTHER voices were calling West's name. Anitchi discovered him even before Marjorie. Then the Tamil girl found her voice. The devil went out of her. In a wild whirl of words she screamed into Supiah's ear. Supiah listened; his cry changed, but in the pandemoniac confusion words rose in vain. The fight was gathering fury, brother pummeling brother in a welter of writhing limbs. But at the sight of West borne lifeless before them the fighting stopped as a clock stops when it is run down.

In the space inside the great open doors of the power-house they laid the unconscious man. Marjorie's cry was not loud, but it stayed with those who heard it. They made way for her and she knelt, oblivious, and gathered him close.

"Water," she cried. "Quick!" Already the water was there. But West did not wake. Neither water nor the reclaiming energy of love could bring him back from the distance to which he had gone.

"I've killed him," moaned Zenas Riggs.

Out in the still night the brown men were silent. Their eyes on West, their bodies moveless, they waited. Their polished skins wet with the sweat of battle, caught the light in steady gleams.

In the edge of the tree-shadows above, another figure stood waiting. At the sudden cessation of the noise Virginia had stolen down to see what was happening; even the unroofed dark seemed better than the blind terrors of the bungalow.

"If he's dead I've killed him!" The words came to her clearly. The white glow from the power-house thrust back the night and in it Zenas Riggs's figure took on the bowed blackness of a kneeling silhouette. "I might have known—You warned me—" The old man, feeling desperately over West's head to see if bones were broken, paused to look up at Burden. "I couldn't see any other way to rid him of that Wakeman girl."

Supiah had disappeared. Anitchi crept nearer. The machines sang to a jubilant rhythm. "That's the noise the morning stars made when they sang together." Marjorie remembered where West had stood when he had said the words, close to the spot where he lay now with the laughter and life gone from his look, the spring of vigor broken in his limp body. An instant she lifted her eyes to the faces round her, blind, desolate, sharply imploring, but only an instant. Then she bent again to her work, clutching at life where life might be already slipped

from her grasp. For West did not stir, did not sigh. The hard floor thrilling to the song of the dynamos gave more response than West.

Virginia, leaning from her shelter, unnoticed, saw it all, heard Zenas Riggs cry out upon his folly, as loud-spoken in his grief as he had before been silent.

"Look at him!—Worn to the bone! And he thinks I sent him away! I thought you two had quarreled over that minx of a Wakeman." He appealed to Marjorie, but waited for no answer. "I might have known he could take care of himself. West! West! Come back and forgive an old fool!"

Goddewana brought more water and hung over the kneeling two, his round face pinched with anxiety. The Major sopped his handkerchief and dabbed it fiercely on the unresenting forehead.

"I thought we'd have a lot of comfort with those two women away!" the remorseful cry went on. "Get his head higher. Get—" Zenas Riggs stopped on the word; as if flung upward by a shock he was upon his feet.

Hinsdale, a bamboo whip in his hand, was sauntering from the land corner of the power-house into the light. A flushed exuberance clung to him, the exhilaration of victory. Marjorie's repulse had been forgotten.

"What you niggers doin' here?" His gaze menaced the brown men, and came finally to the group in the power-house door. "What's the row?

Have I missed it?" His glance went scowlingly back to the brown men; motion rippled their ranks. Then his eyes followed theirs; he looked down. "West—eh?"

Zenas Riggs had not spoken.

"So he sneaked back," commented Hinsdale. Something in the tense absorption of the group, absorption not for him; something in the old man's silence, brought the blood hotly to his face. He leaned close to Marjorie.

"Very effective, this grand-stand play; what bowled him over?" he demanded.

"Stand back." Zenas Riggs's voice was charged with all that its wires would carry.

A sob filtered through the group pressing nearer from without. Anitchi could not be seen, but the sob and the sight of the men's faces, peering, frightened, woke the bully in Hinsdale. He lifted his stick and struck at the nearest devil dancer, then hesitated, stick in air, for Zenas Riggs loomed, over-towering the large man by the colossal strength of rage. Before him the bully retreated.

"You cheap scoundrel!" The old man's voice was not raised; its deliberate utterance beat through the noise of the machines harder than shouting. "Do you think I don't know you! I've known you from the first moment I set my eyes on you. I know you now to the bottom of your black, mean soul!" It was Zenas Riggs the "great-man," the "master

of men," who spoke, not the grief-stricken friend. "I wouldn't take Burden's word for it in Colombo. I came to see for myself. I've played your game for you till I've let an innocent man be murdered—but never think I didn't know you—know you best when I was pretending to believe your lies. Hell's too good for you, John Hinsdale." He did not move but bent a little forward and his eyes gathered up and fastened the shifting gaze of the man before him. "*What are you here for?*"

The sneer on Hinsdale's face grew into blankness, changed to a sickly fear. Cowardice glared furtive from under his half-lowered lids. He retreated farther, turned quickly, disappeared; but Zenas Riggs did not see him go. On his knees beside West, the "great man" worked and pleaded, rubbing lifeless hands, straining in futile effort toward a vanishing hope.

Only Anitchi had watched Hinsdale. And Anitchi would have followed, but Supiah, returning in panting haste as from a search, held her, and spoke with violence. Before his threats brought a faltering answer from the girl, minutes had gone. When Hinsdale was overtaken the lights of the "barracks" showed the two to each other. Supiah's knife was swift; but the delay had served. A scarred forehead is a potent reminder, and Hinsdale's punishment was to be in life, not death.

"West, speak to us!" Riggs's voice still pleaded as he fumbled at West's shoulder. One instant he was shaking the tears from his weather-brown cheeks; the next he was crying out exultant, a sturdy grip on the lax wrist.

"Cat's foot! His arm's out of joint! Get hold there!"

The Major and Burden were ready.

"Now—Pull!"

"Here! What're you doing!" West's shout rang to the stars. The snap of the bone into its socket struck home an agony that woke him. "Marjorie—" He tried to grope his way to his feet.

"She's here," roared Zenas Riggs. "She's here and the other one's going. Are you better? Have they smashed your head?"

Goddewana was at the threshold, speaking to the men outside. The silence beyond the threshold broke.

"Talla Goya! Talla Goya! West and Talla Goya!" shrilled the throng in three languages, and the foremost devil dancer was loudest in the yell.

West was still struggling to get to his feet.

"You stay right there!" commanded Zenas Riggs, and wrung the Major's hand. "We'll carry you."

West subsided. Things were still black when he attempted to sit up. The brown men surged into

the devil-house singing, and lifted him tenderly in their arms.

Marjorie walked beside him. Zenas Riggs and Goddewana tramped before; Burden and the Major, arm in arm, behind.

“Hoh hé roh,
Where great ones go
Blessed is the road,
Light is the load,
Hoh hé roh ! ”

sang the brown men vociferous, their hands contending to aid the carrying of the board that made West's stretcher.

“Hush there!” Burden hovered nearer, protesting. “You'll split his head with your howling! Tell them, Goddewana.”

“Tell them nothing. I like it.” West struggled to lift himself on the well arm, and fell back. “I feel like a fool, Jim. Let me walk,” he demanded.

Zenas Riggs shook his head. The brown men shook theirs and laughed. At Goddewana's signal they raised West higher. Burden motioned them on.

“Blessed is the road,
Light is the load,”

went on the chant.

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Under the sound of it and in the crowding throng, West reached for Marjorie's hand.

"Is that the way you feel?" he asked in an undertone that no one else heard, and Marjorie, bending as if to arrange the coat beneath his head, laid her lips upon the lean fingers that held her own.

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